Mideast Failure: Who's to Blame? *The Editors*

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Long Shot

Jimmy Carter of Georgia

Paul R. Wieck

Last Act in Vietnam—*Stanley Karnow*

Pacific Pullback—*Walter Pincus*

Blackening Africa—*Milton Viorst*

Sorensen on Nixon—*Victor Gold*

TV's Harry O—*Roger Rosenblatt*

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TRB

from Washington
April 12, 1975

Denying the Obvious

We guess that the rising crime rate will be an issue in the next presidential election and that after the voting is over whoever wins will appoint another crime commission. Then after a year or 18 months the new crime commission will bring in a solemn and eloquent report that will shortly thereafter be forgotten. It will be forgotten because it won't tell us what we want to hear. What we want to hear is that the disgraceful American crime rate, which jumped 17 percent in 1974 (highest since the FBI started collecting statistics 45 years ago) is caused by coddling criminals, parental permissiveness, the uppityness of nonwhites and abolishing the death penalty.

No, what the prospective crime commission will tell us, as a long line of previous (and now forgotten) studies have told us is 1) that crime is connected with other social problems and particularly poverty; 2) that crime is principally deterred by the celerity of justice, not the severity of justice; 3) that America's unique, widespread distribution of firearms and particularly handguns is just fine for robbery and murders, and keeps the United States up there at the top of the crime league among all the big nations, and 4) that, if we really want to reduce crime it will cost a pretty penny in social reform and police improvement, and that probably no single investment of money, however big, will so improve the quality of American life as meeting that cost.

Richard Nixon made a fine thing out of crime. Every now and then there is an intense spasm of social fury, as Felix Frankfurter said, and on the issue of law and order Nixon helped create that spasm and then benefited by it. In 1968 he said the Supreme Court and Attorney General Ramsey Clark were soft on crime, which flowed from "a generation-long experiment of leniency with criminals." (The Warren Court had ruled that it was unfair to beat up suspects in police stations and deprive them of lawyers.) "We cannot explain away crime in this country," he said, "charging it off to poverty." That was fine for the hustings because the more complex a problem is the more the listeners want a simple answer.

After the '68 election Nixon had the awkward task of showing that he had reduced crime when he ran again in 1972, and later on. "The 17-year rise in crime has been stopped," he told the nation incorrectly in January 1974. "We can confidently say today that we are finally beginning to win the war against crime." What nonsense; what audacity the man had. It would be impossible to interview the Nixon crime-fighters on this today; they are all in jail. He himself told the nation in 1973 that the only way to attack crime is "without mercy." He got pardoned.

There was the Wickersham crime commission in 1931; Katzenbach, 1967; Kerner, 1968; Milton Eisenhower, 1969, and half a dozen in between. They all said the same thing more or less. I would like the contract for the 1976-77 crime commission: I could compile it with scissors and paste. The Kerner commission ruefully noted the testimony of distinguished sociologist Kenneth Clark saying that he had heard the whole scenario on crime before: "It is a kind of Alice in Wonderland with the same moving picture re-shown over and over again, the same analysis, the same recommendations, the same inaction."

The Eisenhower commission picked up the Clark quote from the Kerner commission. Then, in 1972, came another report from a nonpartisan business group, the Committee for Economic Development. It listed its predecessors and also noted their unheeded message: "Their recommendations over a period of 40 years display a remarkable degree of consistency and similarity . . . A suitable agenda for action has thus been available for 40 years." Crime costs the business community $16 billion a year, it said. That was in 1972.

They should tell that to George Wallace. The last time we saw that bitter-tongued man of the people he was rubbing his hands over the crime issue and vowing that if he had his way he would make Washington's streets safe or bring in the troops. (Sitting there in a wheelchair it did not seem fair to ask him if he still opposed gun control.)

Is it astonishing that serious crime has jumped 17 percent in the US when unemployment has soared? They go up together. Unemployment is now 40 percent for black teenagers in the ghettoes. We shall be lucky to escape turmoil this summer. The black community suffers from crime most, and perhaps half of it goes unreported, some investigators say.

The law-breaker is "likely to be a member of the lowest social and economic groups in the country, poorly educated and perhaps unemployed, unmarried, reared in a broken home, and to have a prior criminal record" (President's Commission on Law Enforcement).

Most of these commissions end with a burst of rhetoric, and one must always remember that simply because they are eloquent does not necessarily mean they are untrue. Hear, for example, what the Katzenbach report said: "Warring on poverty, inadequate housing and unemployment is warring on crime. A civil rights law is a law against crime. Money for schools is money against crime. Medical, psychiatric and family counseling services are services against crime. More broadly and most importantly every effort to improve life in America's 'inner cities' is an effort against crime."

What a change in American life because of crime. Fifty years ago many people didn't lock doors at night. Judged by other countries the decay in American security is unique. It is possible to walk the streets of European cities safely at night. Americans are diverse in origin but that is hardly an adequate explanation for the crime rate. We are coming to live in bolted fortresses. Contrast Tokyo: it has the largest population of any city in the world and the lowest crime rate. There were 213 murders in 1970 (three with pistols). New York (a third smaller in population) had 1117 murders, two-thirds with guns.

The Eisenhower report five years ago found 90 million firearms in civilian hands, including 24 million handguns. If the women's movement would now recognize revolvers as a chauvinist male sex symbol and would move into the fight to control them it would be on strong ground, and would help to cut down the homicide rate.

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A SECOND CHANCE

From ENVIRONMENT Magazine

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With a nice sense of timing, Male Comfort Spray appeared just as certain scientists were warning that aerosol spray products will lead to the end of all life on earth.

It seems that the gas in aerosol cans slowly drifts upwards to the stratosphere where, as a result of chemical reactions too dull to describe here, it can destroy the ozone layer which shields the surface of the earth from lethal ultraviolet sunlight.

I don't know whether the gas used to pressurize Male Comfort Spray is of the type the scientists are worried about. The advertising doesn't say. The only ad I've seen says that Male Comfort Spray is "for under your shorts." It also says that the spray is intended to do "just one thing. To help keep a man's crotch comfortable." The manufacturer evidentally does not intend such unfortunate side effects as the end of all life on earth.

Of course, the sterilization of the earth's surface is not certain, and the benefits of Male Comfort Spray are indubitable. Women who have felt discrimination in the intense marketing of previous inguinal deodorants can take comfort in the fact that now men, too, will become conscious of odors seeping through their waist bands. A blow is struck for sexual equality. The energy crisis will be relieved if we worry less about sweating in the summertime. And, certainly, the relief of the discomfort "only a man can get" is worth taking some risk.

Congress's new Office of Technology Assessment should look into the whole matter. Male Comfort Spray is as useful and probably more characteristic of modern technology than, say, the supersonic transport or the fast breeder nuclear reactor. On the one hand, it has clear benefits. On the other, speculative risks. The balancing of profit and loss is a difficult question and certainly should not be decided precipitously.

Given its potential hazards, we might begin by clearly labeling the Male Comfort Spray to indicate its chemical ingredients. Further and more drastic action might lead to a label warning: "Caution: Use May lead to the End of the World." Extensive study of these alternatives is clearly called for.

In the meantime, sprays directed at the remaining bodily orifices can be confidently expected. From hair spray to foot spray, from one end of the digestive tract to the other, private enterprise will continue to meet the challenges of modern life. And if we can't see those gases drifting slowly upward, we can at least imagine their steady rise toward the sun. Ever upward, like private enterprise itself.

S.N.

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107 OF THE BEST

Ten panels of judges have nominated these 107 books for the 1974 National Book Awards. Only one winner will be named for each of these categories. Each winning author will receive a prize of $1,000 in recognition of outstanding achievement, with the presentation of Awards on April 16th at a ceremony in Avery Fisher Hall at New York's Lincoln Center. Tickets for the Awards ceremony are available to the general public at $5.00 each from Avery Fisher Hall box office.

BOOKS OF THE YEAR

NOMINEES FOR THE 26TH ANNUAL NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS

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Calvin Bedient: EIGHT CONTEMPORARY POETS (Oxford U. Press)
Alessandra Comini: EGON SCHIELE'S PORTRAITS (U. California Press)
Peter Gay: STYLE IN HISTORY (Basic Books)
Richard Gilman: THE MAKING OF MODERN DRAMA: A Study of Buchner, Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, Pirandello, Brecht, Beckett, Handke (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)
Elizabeth Hardwick: SEDUCTIONS AND BETRAYAL: Women and Literature (Random House)
Marjorie L. Hoover: MEYERHOLD: The Art of Conscious Theatre (U. Massachusetts)
H. W. Janson: 16 STUDIES (Harry N. Abrams)
Eleanor Perényi: LISZT: The Artist as Romantic Hero (Atlantic/Little, Brown)
Roger Shattuck: MARCEL PROUST (Viking Press)
Oliver Strunk: ESSAYS ON MUSIC IN THE WESTERN WORLD (W. W. Norton)
Lewis Thomas: THE LIVES OF A CELL: Notes of a Biology Watcher (Viking Press)

BIOGRAPHY

Richard R. Beeman: PATRICK HENRY: A Biography (McGraw-Hill)
Michael Collins: CARRYING THE FIRE: An Astronaut's Journeys (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)
Ben Maddow: EDWARD WESTON: Fifty Years (Aperture Books)
James R. Mellow: CHARMED CIRCLE: Gertrude Stein & Company (Praeger)
Richard B. Sewall: THE LIFE OF EMILY DICKINSON, 2 vols. (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)
Francis Steegmuller: "YOUR ISADORA": The Love Story of Isadora Duncan & Gordon Craig (Random House)
Wallace Stegner: THE UNEASY CHAIR: A Biography of Bernard DeVoto (Doubleday)
Richard M. Sudhalter & Philip R. Evans: BIX: Man and Legend (Arlington House)
Glenn Watkins: GESUALDO: The Man and His Music (U. North Carolina)
James A. Weisheipl, O.P.: FRIAR THOMAS D'AQUINO: His Life, Thought and Work (Doubleday)

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Natalie Babbitt: THE DEVIL'S STORYBOOK (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)
Bruce Buchenholz: DOCTOR IN THE ZOO (Studio/Viking)
Bruce Clements: I TELL A LIE EVERY SO OFTEN (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)
James Lincoln & Christopher Collier: MY BROTHER SAM IS DEAD (Four Winds Press)
Virginia Hamilton: M. C. HIGGINS, THE GREAT (Macmillan)
Jason & Ettagale Lauré: JOI BANGLA! THE CHILDREN OF BANGLADESH (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)
Milton Meltzer: REMEMBER THE DAYS: The Jews of Eastern Europe (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)
Milton Meltzer: WORLD OF OUR FATHERS: A Short History of the Jewish American (Zenith Books/Doubleday)
Adrienne Richard: WINGS (Atlantic/Little Brown)
Mary Stolz: THE EDGE OF NEXT YEAR (Harper & Row)
Jane Yolen: THE GIRL WHO CRIED FLOWERS AND OTHER TALES (T. Y. Crowell)

CONTEMPORARY AFFAIRS

Raoul Berger: EXECUTIVE PRIVILEGE: A Constitutional Myth (Harvard U. Press)
Carl Bernstein & Bob Woodward: ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN (Simon & Schuster)
Robert Campbell: THE CHASM: The Life and Death of a Great Experiment in Ghetto Education (Houghton Mifflin)
Robert A. Caro: THE POWER BROKER: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York (Alfred A. Knopf)
Joe Eszterhas: CHARLIE SIMPSON'S APOCALYPSE (Random House)
Middleton Harris (Editor): THE BLACK BOOK (Random House)
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Franz Schurmann: THE LOGIC OF WORLD POWER: An Inquiry into the Origins, Currents and Contradictions of World Politics (Pantheon Books)
Rachel Scott: MUSCLE AND BLOOD: The Massive, Hidden Agony of Industrial Slaughter in America (E. P. Dutton)
Studs Terkel: WORKING: People Talk about What They Do All Day and How They Feel about What They Do (Pantheon Books)

FICTION

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Gail Godwin: THE ODD WOMAN (Alfred A. Knopf)
Joseph Heller: SOMETHING HAPPENED (Alfred A. Knopf)
Toni Morrison: SULA (Alfred A. Knopf)
Vladimir Nabokov: LOOK AT THE HARLEQUINS! (McGraw-Hill)
Grace Paley: ENORMOUS CHANGES AT THE LAST MINUTE (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)
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Mark Smith: THE DEATH OF THE DETECTIVE (Alfred A. Knopf)
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Thomas Williams: THE HAIR OF HAROLD ROUX (Random House)

HISTORY

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Paul Boyer & Stephen Nissenbaum: SALEM POSSESSED: The Social Origins of Witchcraft (Harvard Univ. Press)
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Dorothy B. Vitaliano: LEGENDS OF THE EARTH: Their Geologic Origins (Indiana U. Press)

TRANSLATION

Clarence Brown & W. S. Merwin: SELECTED POEMS by Osip Mandelstam (Atheneum)
Sheila Cudahy: NO WAY by Natalia Ginzburg (A Helen & Kurt Wolff Book/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich)
Norman Thomas di Giovanni: IN PRAISE OF DARKNESS by Jorge Luis Borges (E. P. Dutton)
Robert Fitzgerald: THE ILIAD (Anchor/Doubleday)
Michael Kandel: THE CYBERIAD: Fables for the Cybernetic Age by Stanislaw Lem (Continuum/Seabury)
Michael Kandel: THE FUTUROLOGICAL CONGRESS (from the Memoirs of Ijon Tichy) by Stanislaw Lem (Continuum/Seabury)
Anthony Kerrigan: THE AGONY OF CHRISTIANITY AND ESSAYS ON FAITH by Miguel D. Unamuno (Princeton U. Press)
Peter Kussi: LIFE IS ELSEWHERE by Milan Kundera (Alfred A. Knopf)
Helen R. Lane: CONDUCTING BODIES by Claude Simon (Richard Seaver/Viking)
Ralph Manheim: THE GUILTLESS by Hermann Broch (Little, Brown Co.)
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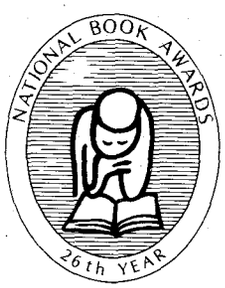

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Who's to Blame

"History is politics"—which is why the current public discussion about who is to blame for the collapse of Dr. Kissinger's Mideast mediation efforts is so intense and even bitter. It is easy to dismiss such talk as an aspect of propaganda war. But in this case at least, serious examination of the negotiating positions of Egypt and Israel reveals a good deal about their intentions and about the political constraints and incentives—foreign and domestic—under which the two governments operated.

In this country, unhappily, the proper and inevitable review of what went wrong in the negotiations has been diverted from a consideration of the merits of the proposals made by Cairo and Jerusalem to an appraisal of whether, given Israel's dependence on the United States, Israel served the broader needs of American foreign policy. This foreign policy—in Indochina, Portugal, the eastern Mediterranean, and as it pertains to energy and trade—is now, thanks in part to Congress, such a shambles that some might think Israel should have done virtually anything (and everything) to provide Washington with a symbolic success in its shuttle diplomacy. To be sure, that's not what the Secretary of State expected; but we are told now almost daily by columnists Evans and Novak, who seem to be acting as Gerald Ford's interlocutors in the matter, that the President believes Israel let him down. This may not be much of a basis on which to build policy, but there are precedents in our history for diplomacy following the dictates of pique. Petulance played a considerable role in the foreign policy of Ford's spiritual ancestor, Dwight Eisenhower, and particularly for his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, when the issue happened to be the Middle East.

Mr. Kissinger, however, certainly knows that no permanent American interest will be served by bullying Israel. He has lectured too much on our responsibilities to allies to allow his disappointments and whatever concrete differences he may have had with Israel during the recent talks to undermine our historical commitment to a democratic society whose safety should be the burden of conscience to civilization. The Secretary feels this possibly more than anyone else in the administration; but there will be great pressure, if not to sacrifice Israel, then to squeeze that nation so much that in the end it is sacrificed. Powerful business interests will see pressure on Israel as a

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lure for the homeless Arab petrodollar. Others will welcome it as a way of disengaging the US from a problem that has come to seem chronic and contagious. Or they will want to punish Israel for frustrating a major American diplomatic initiative, on which more was at stake than the conflict between Israel and the Arabs.

No doubt President Sadat would have welcomed a second stage agreement in the Sinai if he had been able to win one wholly on his own terms. In that sense, it might be correct to say that he did not enter the talks hoping they would fail. But his own terms called for a series of major territorial and economic concessions from Israel—strategic mountain passes, considerable land and valuable oil wells—in exchange for vague and easily revokable assurances, not to Israel, but to the United States. He knew this would be wholly unacceptable to Israel, to any adversary in almost any conflict. But he hoped that the American need for a diplomatic achievement was so great that either the United States would succeed in imposing on the Rabin government a settlement that Rabin could not defend to his own people or, failing to do that, the United States would so reduce its support for Israel that in any future war the military advantage would be Egypt's.

Israel, in contrast, began the talks willing to make substantial geographical concessions—in fact just about what Egypt wanted—and tried during the process to elicit from Cairo political agreements that would justify giving up the two most important negotiating assets it holds in the Sinai. In the end Israel said it would give less territory for lesser political concessions, but Egypt wouldn't contemplate anything other than maximum geographic withdrawals. But, for a broad retreat from occupied lands, Israel wanted not just what has been derided as the meaningless legalistic or Talmudic formula of nonbelligerence. It sought a demilitarized buffer zone in the vacated areas, joint Egyptian-Israeli patrols and electronic surveillance units, a reduction of the economic boycott and propaganda barrage against Israel, direct passage for non-Israeli tourists from Cairo to Tel Aviv, telephone and postal relations—or at least some of these. Jerusalem's precondition for great military movement on its part was some political movement on Egypt's. Why were the Israelis so insistent on having this? Better: why were the Egyptians so insistent on rejecting this?

Egypt's refusal to give the agreement any political character whatever confirmed Israel's worst fears that the transaction Sadat wanted would be more conducive to the conduct of war than to the pursuit of peace. Indeed Egyptian foreign minister Fahmy admitted as much in an address to the Arab League Conference on March 24. "It is clear that what was being discussed was neither a partial solution nor a solution by stages. It is also clear that what was being discussed was neither a temporary nor a permanent political settlement. The aim was a military movement on an agreement with military coloring."

Egypt's negotiating strategies, to say nothing of statements by government officials and quasi-official journalists, indicate that Cairo is not yet willing or able to renounce the war option. The volatile Arab political community, which includes Syria, Iraq, the PLO and Libya, "the rejection front" as it is called, is the greatest factor in pushing Egypt to hold out for the possible dismemberment of Israel through military action or concerted diplomatic activity, using the leverage of oil on Europe and Japan. The Russians also are lurking to play an inflammatory role. In this context, it is good that the United States maintains friendly relations with Egypt, and that it does not engage in frivolous recriminations against Cairo. America, through Dr. Kissinger, remains the most plausible broker among the contending parties, particularly in the polemical jungles of Geneva. At the same time, Americans should not fawn on the Egyptians. Sadat's announcement that he would reopen the Suez Canal on June 5, greeted as "statesmanlike," was accompanied by notice that he would ban from Suez cargoes bound for Israel. As part of the first disengagement agreement, in which Israel released Egypt's surrounded Third Army and withdrew from the African banks of Suez, Sadat pledged in writing to President Nixon (and Nixon communicated it to Mrs. Meir) to allow cargoes bound for Israel through the canal. It is difficult to see how *The Washington Post* and Ambassador Robert Anderson see a gesture violating this promise as a "responsible move." It is certainly not a move destined to build Israeli faith in the credibility of Egyptian commitments, or in American guarantees of these commitments.

For the US to pressure Israel is ill-conceived. Suspending arms deliveries to Israel as the Soviets are increasing their weapons supply to the Arabs will only encourage belligerence among Israeli's neighbors and tempt them yet again to war. Nor does hinting about Israeli intransigence, and inspiring in Jerusalem fear of abandonment, help sustain the deep trust Israel has had in America, trust that has allowed our country to play a critical and responsible role in its own interests and those of peace in the Middle East. Moreover, pressuring Israel is not warranted by dint of the fact that the Rabin government was willing from the outset to cede positions of tremendous strategic advantage to get another agreement, which would at best have been insubstantial. Even if the Egyptians had given in return whatever Israel wanted, decent people would still have held their breath for years.

There may still be room for an American initiative. Israel has made that evident, and Egypt is not anxious to merge its own concerns either with those of the extremist Arab *revanche* or the Soviets. An American initiative will only succeed if we make clear that Israel can't be pushed around simply because we have troubles everywhere else.

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Risky Business

When the Franklin National Bank of New York got in trouble last year, foundered and sank under the weight of its losses, it "rewrote the books" on bank failure, a Treasury Department employee says. Robert Bench, of the international section of the US comptroller's office, says the Franklin's collapse was a "cold shower for the entire industry" because it "opened a whole new area of exposure" to worry about—foreign currency speculation. Part of the Franklin's trouble appears to have been "good old country fraud," Bench says, but the new element was the inept management of large foreign money contracts. The calamity, though one of the first and largest of its kind, was not unforeseeable. The staff of the House Banking Committee, in fact, had known about a year earlier that just such a problem might arise. A delegation from the committee's staff went to visit the Federal Reserve Board—the government's primary bank watcher—in the summer of 1973 to find out what was being done to restrain US banks from taking dangerous risks in the European money markets. The decision to allow international exchange rates to float in early 1973 made the exchange business more volatile than before and increased the opportunities for making quick profits. It also created new hazards. Bankers not adept at currency manipulation, like rubes in Monte Carlo, risked getting fleeced. The floating rates also made life more difficult for experienced traders. But when House Banking Committee people talked with officials at the Fed, they came away disappointed. A member of the delegation, Jane D'Arista, said her group suggested setting up a program to monitor US banks' behavior in the currency markets, but "the Fed staff didn't seem interested."

Seven months later what was feared happened. The directors of the Franklin National said they were having trouble wth foreign currency holdings, and then on May 12, 1974 they announced that during the previous six weeks the bank had lost $14 to $25 million because an employee in the foreign exchange department had "operated beyond his authority and without the bank's knowledge." Investors began pulling out. The Federal Reserve Bank of New York, to prevent a sudden closing and panic, began lending money at a furious pace, pumping it through the Franklin's accounts into the hands of investors. By May 1, the Fed had poured in one billion dollars with no indication that the crisis would soon end. When the bank finally closed at the government's order on October 8, the Fed had put in more than $1.7 billion and taken over about $700 million in unwanted foreign currency contracts bought by the Franklin's not-so-clever money traders. The total loss resulting from bad handling of foreign accounts came to about $50 million.

The new chairman of the House Banking Committee, Rep. Henry Reuss, worries that the Franklin experience could recur somewhere else. He wrote to the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, Arthur Burns, on March 26 to find out what is being done to prevent American banks from overextending themselves in foreign currency deals and to see whether new guidelines might now be necessary. In his letter, Reuss points out that though the Franklin is the most egregious example, it isn't the only case of mismanaged foreign accounts. He wrote that last June "six other American banks—Chase Manhattan, First National City Bank, Wells Fargo, Morgan Guaranty, the Girard Bank, and Seattle's First National Bank—lost a combined total of $60 million in the collapse of Bankhaus I.D. Herstatt (of West Germany), another failure caused by excessive foreign exchange speculation." One expert suggested that the size of Herstatt's loss ($160 million) may have been the result in part of bungling by German officials who failed to take account of differences in time zones when they decided to close the bank at midday. On the other hand, the bank may have gone broke at midday. The Herstatt example worries the staff of the Banking Committee more than the Franklin's collapse because it illustrates that even the largest and most sophisticated banks can be hurt when a small cog in the machinery breaks down. Some of the big American banks lost money in this case simply because transactions that were supposed to clear through Herstatt got stuck there. Other distinguished banks that have been stung in currency trading recently are Lloyd's of London, the Banque de Bruxelles, West Deutschlander, Hessiche, the First National of Boston and Credit Suisse.

A law passed by Congress in 1973 requires American banks to report foreign currency holdings to the Fed and the Treasury Department on a weekly and monthly basis. The reports began coming in late last year, but the comptroller's office, whose job it is to regulate national banks like the defunct Franklin, isn't satisfied with the information it's getting. As Robert Bench explained, there's no requirement that banks reveal the "time gap" in their currency holdings. For example, a bank may report an "exposure" of zero in deutschemarks even though it has agreed to sell a million deutschemarks tomorrow and buy a million two months from now. Its real liability is larger than the present reporting system would indicate. Banks will soon have to supply information on their "gaps" as well as their net exposure, though at the moment no one can say when this new information will begin to come in. Staff employees at the Fed and the comptroller's office believe it would be a mistake to adopt written guidelines on the amount of risk a bank may take. They argue that the ability to manage foreign accounts varies greatly from bank to bank, and that no single rule would apply to all banks. They prefer to remain flexible and regulate banks on an individual basis. To do this job well, however, requires a large, aggressive and intelligent policing staff—something the government doesn't have.

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The Underarm Menace

Not So Sure

The spectacle of corporate giants spending millions of dollars promoting Arrid, Ban, Dial, Right Guard and Sure in a mad scramble for shares in a half-billion dollar market for antiperspirants and deodorants cries out for pungent social commentary, as well as for gloomy dicta about resource misallocation. Do the armpits of America really merit such attention? Is our national preoccupation with matters olfactory the cause or the result of this chemical onslaught on axillary fumes?

Unhappily, there is a darker side to the underarm business. A head-on collision between Procter & Gamble (P&G) and a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advisory panel that has just called for a halt in the sale of two popular P&G antiperspirants provides a classic example of how cut-throat, unbridled competition can subject consumers to potentially serious health hazards. The controversy is also testing the mettle of the FDA.

In 1973 P&G launched a TV commercial campaign featuring earnest young people telling how sure they were that a new product called Sure was the best antiperspirant on the market. But a year later, a panel of independent experts convened by FDA to assess the safety and effectiveness of antiperspirants concluded that it wasn't at all sure that zirconium, the active ingredient in Sure and Secret, another P&G underarm spray, was safe for use in an aerosol. The panel dismissed as inadequate the scientific data presented by P&G to establish the safety of zirconium, and found that the substance creates an unacceptable risk of lung damage when inhaled. Caught in the middle is Dr. Alexander Schmidt, FDA commissioner, who must now decide whether to translate the panel's recommendation into regulatory action, and chance provoking a legal challenge.

P&G, the largest national advertiser, has a great deal riding on Sure. According to *Advertising Age*, the company invested $42 million in promoting the product in its first year. The campaign included $15 million in TV and print advertising, and an unsolicited mailing of millions of small cans of Sure to consumers. By 1974 Sure had gained third place in the armpit derby, with 12 percent of the market, behind Gillette's Right Guard (18.5 percent) and Carter-Wallace's Arrid (16 percent), and overtaking Bristol-Myers Ban line (eight percent).

At the same time, however, doubts were arising about the safety of Sure. On October 1, 1973, Gillette announced it was recalling two brand new antiperspirants, Right Guard Extra Strength and Soft & Dri Extra Strength, because inhalation tests produced lung damage in monkeys. The products also contained the metal called zirconium, the active ingredient in Sure. The usual hazard from antiperspirants and deodorants had been thought to be underarm skin irritation. Lung damage is obviously a more serious matter.

Unloved both within the industry and at FDA because of its arrogance and constant use of power tactics, P&G did nothing to belie its reputation as it spared no effort or expense to defend Sure. The news that Gillette had also tested Sure and found lung irritation in monkeys served more to infuriate P&G officials than to arouse worry about the millions of consumers breathing zirconium in their bathrooms every morning.

Both companies submitted their data to FDA, which decided to take no immediate action against Sure. The agency had initiated a study of all nonprescription drugs, and antiperspirants fell within the legal definition of "drug." Therefore FDA passed the buck to the panel of experts who were reviewing antiperspirants.

The panel then sifted all available evidence on the safety of zirconium in aerosols. A phalanx of P&G officials made oral presentations assuring that Sure was harmless. A Philadelphia physician claimed that three of his patients have lung lesions caused by zirconium (a charge that has not yet been confirmed to the panel's satisfaction). Last November 27 the panel issued a preliminary statement weighing benefits—the possibility of slightly drier armpits—against the long-term risk of lung damage, and turned thumbs down on zirconium.

P&G was given time to respond, and in December inundated the panel with more data. It took a month to study the new submissions and to find nothing in them to clear Sure. But because of the absence of clinical evidence that zirconium was actually harming human lungs—not surprising, since the type of lung damage associated with the ingredient takes up to 20 years to develop—the panel decided not to urge an immediate ban, but to give notice that in its final report it would require the withdrawal of zirconium sprays from the market. Under FDA procedures in effect for the over-the-counter drug review, this meant that as a practical matter P&G would have several more years to sell Sure, and might be able to buy even more time with legal delay tactics.

The implications were not lost on the competition. Carter-Wallace, which had already test-marketed a zirconium antiperspirant (Arrid Double X), began what was to be a $12.5 million advertising campaign for it. Gillette prepared to move ahead again with its zirconium spray. When it learned in late March of this fresh barrage of zirconium about to be loosed on consumers, the panel expressed astonishment, changed its mind and asked Commissioner Schmidt to blow the whistle.

The issue squarely before him is whether the public should be further exposed to the risk of serious pulmonary damage from a product for which adequate nonaerosol substitutes (roll-ons and creams) exist; or whether consumers should continue to be guinea pigs

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in a nationwide experiment to see whether zirconium really does harm to human lungs. Questions about the safety of nonzirconium aerosol antiperspirants loom since the testing of these products for possible long-term hazards to the lungs seems similarly insufficient.

If FDA places upon industry the burden of proving that the sprays are reasonably safe for daily inhalation, the cost of meeting this requirement will be heavy. We may even have to do without some of those wonderful TV commercials.

Joseph A. Page

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Continental Freedom Struggle

Blackening Africa

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

The social center of this hot and dusty seaport is the sidewalk cafe of the New Africa Hotel, where visiting journalists, businessmen, diplomats and tourists take shelter from the late afternoon sun over cool beer and lemonade, and eavesdrop on the young blacks who function as resident revolutionaries. For a decade Dar es Salaam has been the hub of the liberation movements aimed at the white-dominated countries of Southern Africa. It is here that diplomatic and financial contacts are made, that strategy is debated, that propaganda is published and disseminated, that infiltration is initiated into and out of the occupied territories. In the seamy offices along the streets of this city, young men dream and conspire—and, like political exiles everywhere, convey a faintly pathetic smell. But these days it is the heartier smell of success that dominates.

There is among the regulars on the terrace of the New Africa Hotel a buoyancy that is discernible to almost everyone. FRELIMO, after a decade of grim struggle in the jungles of Mozambique and of thankless drudgery in the sweat boxes of Dar es Salaam, has won a mighty victory, and is about to transform itself into the government of its homeland. Its delegations are received by the Presidents of African states, and its leader, Samora Machel, has himself been honored as head of state in such capitals as Peking and Pyongyang. Its triumph, after so many disappointments, has given new heart to Namibia's SWAPO, to Rhodesia's ZANU and ZAPU, to South Africa's Pan African Congress. Having beaten the Portuguese, the African liberation movement is now ready to move on toward its goal, the establishment of black government as far as the Cape of Good Hope.

Indeed, a year ago, before the Lisbon coup, which led directly to Portugal's agreement to withdraw from its African colonies, the revolutionary activity in Dar es Salaam looked like little more than an exercise, expensive and bloody and even heroic but ultimately futile. Though the anti-Portuguese guerrillas had won local successes, they appeared to be far from victory. Rhodesia seemed comfortably secure and apartheid's South Africa, the most glaring affront to black humanity but the most powerful bastion of them all, appeared impregnable. Then the Portuguese collapse in Mozambique and Angola, in addition to being a huge fillip to black African morale, suddenly swept away giant protective buffers from South Africa's northeastern and northwestern frontiers. The strategic implications of this change were lost neither on the revolutionaries in Dar es Salaam nor on the hardheaded government in Pretoria.

Overnight the South African government has devised policies—for which it uses the name "détente"—aimed openly at mollifying its black neighbors to the north. To the chagrin of the Ian Smith government, it has put significant pressure on white Rhodesia, which cannot survive without South Africa's military and economic support, to negotiate a new constitution with Rhodesia's blacks. It has made serious diplomatic overtures to black heads of state; Prime Minister B.J. Vorster has actually called on President William Tolbert in Liberia, while unconfirmed rumor has it that he has made secret visits to other African capitals. It has decentralized some of its domestic authority to enhance the power of the *bantustans*, hoping thereby to convey the message that South African blacks will henceforth be in charge of their own social development. He has abolished some of the harassing restrictions blacks faced under the rules known as petty apartheid. What he has not done is give an inch on the principle of apartheid itself and, since it looks as if he never will, South Africa is not likely to succeed in its détente objectives.

The response to South Africa's new attitude varies here in Dar es Salaam. The young revolutionaries at the New Africa Hotel are contemptuous of it. They argue that if Vorster were sincere about Rhodesia, he would simply withdraw the South African troops that are helping to guard Rhodesia's borders, and he would close South African ports to Rhodesia's goods. They maintain that the policy of détente is aimed chiefly at dividing black Africa, by dangling commercial advantages before those governments that are getting tired of the long struggle. Undoubtedly there is much truth in what they say but the Tanzanian government, which

COMING: the death penalty—
back by popular demand,
a report by Michael Roberts

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has long borne a disproportionate part of the costs of this struggle, is less negative. It argues, in effect, that if South Africa is willing to sell out its Rhodesian friends, there is no reason why the liberation movement should not seize the opportunity.

Certainly there is no sign that South Africa, as free black governments approach closer to its frontiers, has a hope of permanently turning away their wrath. "If Vorster wants to talk to us, we're not saying no," Tanzanian Foreign Minister Malecela said in an interview. "All we are saying is, talk to our 18 million brothers in South Africa first and if they tell us they need us in such talks, we will certainly join them." When I asked the representative of a Rhodesian liberation group whether some future black government, in gratitude for Vorster's pressure on Ian Smith, might tolerate South Africa such as it is, he answered indignantly, "The freedom struggle in Africa is continental. It is not imaginable for a black government to make a sordid deal like agreeing not to extend the freedom struggle to South Africa." My own impression is that Vorster's détente policy will not succeed even in buying time for South Africa.

Insofar as there is a focal point in Dar es Salaam to the independence struggle, it is the tightly guarded headquarters of the Liberation Committee of the Organization of African Unity, six or seven blocks from the New Africa Hotel. The committee, representing all of the nonwhite states on the continent, receives and distributes funds for the anti-colonial struggle. Most of the money is transmitted by assessment from African governments, the rest from friendly states and private sources outside. This committee also supervises the operation of the guerrilla training camps in Tanzania and Zambia, and distributes weapons and ammunition, most of it from China. To get figures of any sort from the liberation committee is difficult, but it conveys a serious military air in its work.

An Egyptian named Ahmed Sidky is director of military operations. Though he wears starched fatigues and carries a swagger stick, he insists he is not a soldier but a diplomat temporarily detached from the Egyptian foreign service. On behalf of the committee, Sidky modestly acknowledges credit for the fighting in Mozambique and Angola that led to the Portuguese coup and, subsequently, to freedom for the colonies. "We were overcome by those events," he said. "Frankly, they came faster than we thought, and we were not prepared for them. Now we are shifting our priorities. We think our next successes will be in Rhodesia and Namibia. But it may take a long time." There is no evidence, however, of discouragement on the terrace of the New Africa Hotel; there is resignation to a long series of wars, and a confidence that they will succeed.

Milton Viorst

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Exchanging Dictators In Portugal

"Grandola," the hauntingly militant anthem of Portugal's April 25th coup d'état, is a self-proclaimed song of the "ordinary people," and a plea for their personal and political freedom. It was the most popular song in Portugal during the waning months of the Caetano regime, and it is the song that the leaders of the Portuguese Armed Forces Movement chose last year to signal the start of their rebellion in the early morning hours of April 25. It has been played ever since on Portuguese radio and television before and after important government pronouncements, and as an exhortation to the "ordinary people" to remain loyal to the principles of the revolution. On March 11 this year "Grandola" was played almost constantly in the wake of the botched military insurrection, which the ruling junta blamed on the followers of the ill-fated Gen. António de Spínola.

But although "Grandola" continues to be played, its message—that the Portuguese people have the right to live in peace and freedom and to choose their own form of government—has begun to ring hollow. A few days ago, when President Francisco Costa Gomes spoke to the nation, many of his listeners were surprised that his words were strikingly similar to the words that the late António Oliveira Salazar used to employ to defend the dictatorial practices of his long-lived regime. "The Portuguese people," Costa Gomes declared, "are not sufficiently enlightened politically to reject elitist and pseudo-revolutionary parties." Salazar had written "The Portuguese people are not yet prepared for democracy, which results in the despotic domination of the nation by political parties with alien ideologies."

There are those who argue that Portugal had more freedom under Salazar and Caetano than under its present government. It has been noted, for example, that the number of political prisoners today is far higher than the 180 released after the fall of the Caetano regime. Aside from the 2000 former members of the Salazarist secret police who are now jailed in Lisbon, Portugal's political prisons include 300 people arrested during the spurious counterrevolution of September 28, an estimated 200 businessmen accused of "economic crimes" and 300 people arrested after the March 11 insurrection. The regime's critics also argue that there is less press freedom today than under Salazar and Caetano. Under Salazar, a veteran Socialist wrote recently, "there was at least an emasculated opposition press. *A Republica* and the weekly *Seara Nova* regularly attacked the old regime. Even the establishment papers contained a great deal of criticism of Salazar." Today there is no opposition press. Attempts to establish opposition papers have been foiled, existing papers are rigorously censored by trade unionists, and

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goon squads patrol the city rooms. The nationalization of the banks, which supported most of Portugal's dailies, has given the government almost complete control over the future of the press, and most Portuguese observers are convinced that credit will be withheld from any papers refusing to conform to the political line of the regime. Finally, the regime's critics add, the current secret police, COPCON, are far more ruthless and efficient than Salazar's Gestapo-trained security police. COPCON, aided by gangs of vigilantes, has made life miserable for Portugal's democratic parties.

The events of March 11 have totally altered the picture in Portugal. We may never know whether the failed coup that took place on that day was really the work of Gen. Spínola and his supporters, or whether it was a Communist trap—as Spínola now claims—to destroy the Popular General, but it is certain that the Communists and their allies in the armed forces have emerged far stronger in the wake of the coup than they were before. Ever since a Communist poll, published in *O Expresso*, revealed the party to have the support of less than 10 percent of the Portuguese people, the Communists have been looking for an excuse to remove their potentials rivals. The March 11 coup has given them the opportunity they have been waiting for to rid themselves of their enemies both within the armed forces and within the various political parties.

Immediately after the suppression of the March 11 insurrection, a 24-member Revolutionary Council was formed to conserve the revolutionary spirit of April 25. The council, which is dominated by extreme left members of the Armed Forces Movement, allied to the Communist party, granted itself power to dominate virtually every sector of Portuguese life, powers beyond the wildest dreams of Salazar. The council moved quickly to arrest political opponents of the regime. In the first few days after March 11, it ordered the nationalization of the banks and insurance companies (which control over 50 percent of Portuguese industry); it banned the conservative Christian Democratic party along with two anti-Cunhal leftist parties, the Workers and Peasants Alliance and the Movement for the Reorganization of the Proletariat party; it threatened to ban the moderate-socialist Popular Democratic party; and it ordered the Red Guards of the extreme Portuguese Democratic Movement (MDP) into the streets to harass Socialists, Center Democrats and other political forces. Luís Arouca, the respected Socialist journalist, was arrested by members of the MDP and sent to the Caixas Political Prison outside Lisbon, along with Jorge de Melo, the director of C.U.F., Portugal's biggest industrial empire, and the directors of a number of smaller Portuguese corporations. Meetings of both the Socialists and the Popular Democrats were broken up, and members of the conservative Center Democratic party were threatened with bodily harm or worse if they did not agree to withdraw from the elections now scheduled for April 25 in which they are expected to win more votes than any other party—provided the Communist-dominated "technicians" who will control the counting of the ballots do not decide to rig the elections.

What once looked like the dawning of a new day in Portugal now strikes most observers, in the words of a leading Socialist, as nothing more than a "change of imposters." The rightist dictatorship of Salazar and Caetano has now been replaced by a dictatorship that promises to be even more ruthless.

Peter P. Witonski

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Military Maneuvering

Pacific Pullback

by Walter Pincus

Honolulu

Both in Washington and here at the headquarters of the commander in chief of US Pacific forces (CINCPAC), civilian policymakers and top-ranking military planners are wrestling with the complex problems of retrenching US military forces. Forcing change is lack of funds and a new political reality in Asia. Gone is the old Cold War policy of containment of Communist China. Although Peking is not considered an ally, it no longer

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is viewed as an aggressive foe.

Instead of a Cold War battlefield, Asia now is perceived as the scene of the Peking-Moscow rivalry. The Soviet Union maintains some 48 divisions along its long border with China. In response the Chinese keep a major portion of their armed forces in the northern border areas. Thus, US planners believe, China now looks favorably on a US presence in the Pacific as a means to counterbalance the Soviets. Rather than pressing for American cutbacks and withdrawals in such countries as Thailand, Korea and the Philippines, Peking is arguing privately against them while at the same time encouraging US expansion into the Indian Ocean.

If we are not fighting world Communist expansion in Asia, what are we doing there? Diplomats in Washington and military men at CINCPAC say we are promoting "stability," keeping the sea and airlanes open and trying to make certain that the increasing range of the Soviet navy is not followed by more direct Soviet advances.

Gone from the US Asian rhetoric are goals such as the advancement of democratic forms of government in the area. That seems to be one of the difficult to learn lessons of the Vietnam war. And while President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger say US failure to provide continued aid to the Thieu and Lon Nol governments would be damaging to other US relationships, the military and political planners note that many of America's Asian friends have already adjusted to the Vietnam-Cambodian debacles. They see the increasing trend toward tough, one-man rule by Presidents Park in Korea, Marcos in the Philippines and a tightening of the already autocratic Taiwan regime. As the American presence in those countries grows smaller, one defense planner at CINCPAC suggested, they "will go back to doing what they always wanted to do." And without pressure for political and economic reforms pressed on them by the Americans using aid as a lever, those governments apparently aim to grow just as tough and authoritarian as the Communist regimes they see thriving in North Vietnam and North Korea.

CINCPAC military men, for example, believe Korean President Park's turn away from democratic government may soon get him into trouble. They say, however, their direct influence over him—which was great when US military aid poured into Korea—has weakened fast, particularly in political, as opposed to military, matters.

Japan remains the cornerstone of US Asian policy. Over the past six years the American military presence there has slowly declined, initially in response to political pressures but more recently as part of cutbacks associated with lack of funds. A major US navy installation remains at Yokosuka and a marine air station at Iwakuni. The air force base at Yokota near Tokyo occasionally draws criticism and there has been some thought given to moving the units to another American-built base at Misawa, on Japan's northern island of Honshu.

The Japanese bases represent the northern flank of what US planners see as a reversion to a pre-Vietnam Asian deployment. US air force units continue to operate out of Kadena on Okinawa, which was transferred from the US to Japan several years ago. Gone from that island are the nuclear weapons once stored there as well as the US army units associated with Vietnam. The marines, however, maintain their base and thus give the US a modest sized landing force capability.

To the south US planners hope to keep the air force base at Clark Field in the Philippines and the extensive navy facilities at Subic Bay. The latter complex, built up in response to Vietnam, is the only new major installation included in post-Vietnam deployment plans. Overall, US Pacific forces are expected to end up within a few years at a level near that of 1960. The mix will be different with the US army down to minimal strength, the navy larger than it was and the air force increased slightly.

The American presence in Korea, Taiwan and Thailand is still under study. There is some budgetary pressure to cut into the one division in Korea and withdraw one of the several fighter squadrons there—particularly as the Koreans themselves master the F-4 fighters they have received. On Taiwan, the American presence has dropped to 4000 men and may go even lower. Some withdrawals were post-Vietnam, others were made as gestures for the Peking government. Though the defense treaty commitment to defend Taiwan remains firm, there is general recognition that the Peking government has too much to lose now in its relations with the US, by threatening Taiwan militarily. Furthermore both the US and Taiwanese leaders know that Peking does not have either the air or amphibious forces needed to carry out an invasion.

Thailand presents another problem. American officials believe recent calls for total withdrawal of US forces from that country were rhetoric only. There are US planners who would, however, like to take the Thais at their word and get out. The major US-used facilities in that country were developed solely to fight the Vietnam war. The B-52 base at U-Tapao cut the cost of heavy bomber raids on North and South Vietnam that previously had to come from Guam and Okinawa. Though the establishment of a strategic US B-52 base on mainland Asia should have been done only after studying the strategic implications, in the case of U-Tapao it was not. Ironically, however, it is now the diplomats concerned with giving Peking assurances who want to keep the US at U-Tapao. They were the ones who raised objections to the base in the first place when it was put in for financial reasons only and without consideration of the concern it would raise in Peking and Moscow. With an eye toward the develop-

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ing rivalry with the Soviets in the Indian Ocean, some navy planners want to keep U-Tapao and the nearby US-built port of Sattahip—at least with skeleton US caretaker units.

Along with the visible moves of cutting down forces and closing bases, another less-publicized reduction step is now underway. Since the 1950s the US has maintained substantial stocks of tactical nuclear weapons in the Pacific theater, both aboard ships and on land. Though their location and amounts have been highly classified, they range from nuclear artillery shells to atomic anti-submarine devices to bombs that have yields 10 times the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima.

As with most tactical nuclear weapons, the military situations that would trigger their actual use in the Pacific theater were never really thought out before they were deployed. At one point, President Eisenhower contemplated their use to protect Taiwan; at another, use was threatened in order to gain a Korea settlement. Countries in the late 1950s who felt better protected by their presence permitted them to be stored on their land.

When Okinawa's reversion back to Japan was being discussed, some decisions had to be made on relocation of the weapons that up to then had been stored on the island. Apparently they were moved back to Guam or to the US. Discussions on the handling of other nuclear weapons apparently continued. From a foreign policy standpoint, the presence of nuclear weapons close to mainland China stood as an irritant to a new policy of better relations with Peking. Militarily, tactical nuclear bombs and artillery shells, fabricated in the late 1950s or lacking the new television or laser guidance system, were becoming obsolete. "Smart" bombs, developed during the Vietnam war, gain through accuracy on the battlefield the destructive advantage formerly considered the major plus for the nuclear weapons, and they create no fallout hazard. Furthermore military men are increasingly concerned about the security threat posed by potential theft of small nuclear devices.

Adm. Noel Gayler, CINCPAC commander, has taken a lead in the reexamination of tactical nuclear weapons. As Pacific theater commander it would be his task to recommend presidential authority for their use. Gayler, however, does not hide his doubts about their usefulness, and the "inertia of thought" that has prevented a reexamination up to now. He is particularly critical of the "new look" in tac nukes, the smaller, lighter weapons that have been promoted by the army with the argument that this is just one additional weapon in the arsenal.

Gayler believes it would be unwise to rely on tactical nuclear weapons against Russia without recognizing the inevitable escalation that would take place. As for using such weapons against an Asian force, Gayler thinks in light of history, that would be considered a "racist act" and polarize the continent against the US.

The one potential for such weapons is as a deterrent—but even there it is the uncertainty of use rather than a promise of use that marginally may justify their presence in the Pacific theater. Even so, Gayler believes the present numbers should be reduced both at sea and on land.

More than words are involved here. Last summer, the Defense Department announced that a small F-4 alert fighter bomber unit, which had a nuclear capability, was being removed from Taiwan with all its support groups. Before that decision was made, it was strongly argued that the Taiwan government would seriously object. US Ambassador to Taiwan Walter McConaghy returned to Washington to voice his own concerns. Yet when the withdrawal went through and McConaghy told officials in Taiwan, they showed so little emotion he feared they did not understand. Other Defense officials say the Taiwanese were just being realistic. They knew the US would never use those aircraft for a nuclear mainland attack and they had resigned themselves to accept the new Peking-Washington relationship as the best guarantee of their own security.

Gayler's refreshing reservations about tactical nuclear weapons and his realistic acceptance of the economic need to cut back on bases and troop deployments does not mean he believes the end has come to the use of US military power. Quite the contrary. The lesson of Vietnam to Gayler and other military leaders is that in the future exercise of power, sharp, decisive action should be undertaken. Slowly raising the military pressure does not work. As CINCPAC commander in December 1972, Gayler was closely involved in the heavy bombing of North Vietnam. He believes in those eight and a half days the Hanoi government was forced into a military decision to negotiate because their ability to continue the war had been affected. He also believes that in the later negotiations, what had been gained militarily by the December bombing in the North was lost in the final agreement.

Translated to a current situation, Gayler suggests that any effort to take Taiwan, for example, would be met with the full power of the Seventh Fleet.

The American military view of both its own capabilities and the Asian situation has changed sharply over the past seven years. Perhaps, as former Sen. J. W. Fulbright said recently, we "are coming to maturity . . . recognizing we can't control events." If that is the case, liberals who want to reshape repressive non-Communist regimes as well as conservatives who want to actively oppose communism wherever it appears may find the US defense establishment has left both behind. Gone from the US arsenal will be the ability to fight brushfire wars in the Pacific. And also missing will be the internal leverage that rested upon big US military assistance teams and weapons grants.

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Inglorious Defeat

Last Act in Vietnam

by Stanley Karnow

During a visit to Washington not long ago the celebrated British military expert, Sir Robert Thompson, assured US officials that the South Vietnamese army contingents he had recently inspected were not only among the finest fighting forces in the world, but, in some respects, they were better than crack American and European units. Many Pentagon and State Department specialists found nothing especially unusual in that appraisal, however. For since January 1973, when President Nixon proclaimed that he had achieved "peace with honor" in Vietnam, it had become an article of faith in US government circles that the so-called Vietnamization program was working successfully and that South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu's regime, which had been armed to the teeth in the months prior to the agreement signed in Paris, could defend itself against any plausible Communist attack. But the present debacle in South Vietnam has shattered those illusions. Within the past few weeks, Thieu's troops have collapsed in a spectacle of cowardice, cruelty and confusion that has not been seen in the Far East since the final gasp of the Chinese civil war. Entire divisions evaporated in the face of their enemy while soldiers killed women and children, and in most un-Asian fashion, even abandoned their families in the panic to flee. At this writing Thieu has lost more than three-quarters of the country, and it is doubtful whether he, or his successors should he be ousted in the days ahead, can hold the area around Saigon and even the capital itself. Assessing the situation, a senior Defense official says "The short-term prospects are grim and the long-range prospects are bleak."

The immediate causes of the current chaos in Vietnam go back to early last month, when Thieu was alarmed by the possibility that Banmethuot, the capital of the highland province of Darlac, might be captured by North Vietnamese and Vietcong forces. He had repeatedly vowed never to yield an inch of territory to the Communists, and as lately as January, in an interview with *Washington Post* correspondent Philip A. McCombs, he had pledged that the South Vietnamese would "fight to the last cartridge." But now, rather than attempt to rush reinforcements to Banmethuot, he chose instead to let the town fall, and the Communists took it over with scarcely a shot. By Vietnamese standards retreat is somehow preferable to defeat, and so Thieu apparently felt that he had salvaged his pride by withdrawing. His reasons for pulling out were also practical and sensible, since he lacked the manpower to protect the region. About the same time, moreover, he calculated for the same reasons that he could not hang on to the highland provinces of Pleiku and Kontum as well as to the central Vietnam city of Hue, and in a meeting with his generals in Saigon on March 14, he announced his decision to give up those places. Here again his concept was sound, but the manner in which the order was executed triggered the catastrophe that was to follow. "It was the first time in 15 years that the South Vietnamese were making a major move without American help," said a State Department specialist with long experience in Vietnam, "and they simply didn't know what to do."

The withdrawal scheme was neither staffed nor studied in advance. No thought was given to the removal of materiel, and there was no consideration of the impact that the military evacuation might have on the local population. Troops instructed to leave their camps within an hour or less therefore destroyed fuel and ammunition, left artillery pieces, trucks and other equipment, and fled with what they could carry on their backs. Their hurried flight frightened civilians, and soon the roads out of the highlands were clogged with refugees as the Communists filled the vacuum created by the massive departure. Thieu's decision to remove an airborne division from Hue meanwhile made the defense of that city untenable, and even more disastrous episodes unfolded along the coast as troops raced refugees southward, battling them to squeeze onto rescue aircraft or boats headed for towns that would be overtaken by the Communists days afterward. The past weeks will certainly go down as one of the biggest human horrors in modern history, and it will be years before the deeper causes of the cataclysm can be explained. American analysts familiar with Vietnam suggest some factors that, they believe, contributed to aggravating the tumult beyond anyone's worst expectations.

The South Vietnamese army performed honorably and courageously during the Tet offensive of 1968 and again during the Communist drive four years later. But then they had the advantage of four elements provided for them by an American presence. They had unlimited firepower, made possible by US logistical support. They had mobility in the US helicopters that could transport their units rapidly around the country. They were bulwarked by US aircraft, including B-52s, which

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probably played a decisive role in halting the North Vietnamese push in 1972. And they had American advice, which had been useless during the guerrilla phase of the war but became significant when the conflict escalated to conventional proportions. Without these crutches, the South Vietnamese army has revealed itself to be, in contrast to Sir Robert Thompson's estimate, a shambles that has been eroded by corruption, favoritism, political rivalries and apathy. Large numbers are either "phantoms," nonexistent men carried on rosters in order to pad officers' payrolls, or "flower soldiers," who actually work on their family farms and split their wages with their commanders. Confronted by a real crisis, these troops understandably had little will to fight. Many of them must have been demoralized even before the present events by the conviction that they were locked into an endless, senseless war—even though they went on fighting and dying because, to them, the conflict had become their culture.

The Ford administration's noisy effort to persuade Congress to provide supplemental aid to Vietnam also, it seems to me, paradoxically served to unhinge the Thieu regime. For by continuously warning in public that the Saigon government would crumble unless it were given an additional $300 million this fiscal year, the administration probably convinced Thieu that he was in fact approaching the brink of disaster and may have prompted his precipitous actions. Moreover, as some administration officials now concede privately, Mr. Ford made a mistake by staging a showdown with Congress on the aid issue, since his setback exacerbated the psychological malaise that was gripping the South Vietnamese. Skeptics on Capitol Hill contend, though, that the matter of assistance to Saigon is really secondary, and that the administration's principal objective has been to lay the foundations for a campaign to hold the Democratic majority in Congress responsible for the delivery of South Vietnam to communism in much the same way that the Republicans in the 1950s blamed the "loss" of China on Harry Truman. In any case, Thieu had the means to fight. Contrary to assertions by Secretary of State Kissinger and others that US aid to South Vietnam has been limited by congressional cuts to ammunition and fuel, the Pentagon revealed last month that the Saigon regime has been receiving sufficient spare parts and other help. Intelligence sources believe that US military assistance to South Vietnam is roughly twice that of Soviet and Chinese military aid to Hanoi. John W. Finney, *The New York Times'* Pentagon correspondent, further revealed recently that the $300 million in supplementary aid requested by the administration is not needed this fiscal year but is being sought to build up South Vietnam for the coming year.

Analysts who keep a watch on Hanoi submit that the Communists were undoubtedly surprised by the speed with which the South Vietnamese forces have come apart, but have adapted themselves to the situation and are quickly consolidating their gains. According to one of these analysts, the Communists were hesitant to take the initiative until now out of fear that the US would renew the bombing of North Vietnam, and they hoped instead that by gradually increasing their pressure on Thieu they might undermine him and open the way for a South Vietnamese leader who would be willing to make a political compromise. Even now, with most of South Vietnam under their control, the Communists are still saying that they are prepared to negotiate with a Saigon regime that has excluded Thieu and is willing to agree to the "strict application" of the Paris accords of 1973—which, in Hanoi's interpretation, would essentially mean the establishment of a coalition government containing Communists in South Vietnam. Some specialists think that the overthrow of Thieu and an expression of willingness by his successors to talk may at least bring about a cease-fire and avert a bloody battle for Saigon. Others suggest, however, that the Communists would not give up the momentum that appears to be propelling them toward victory.

The opposition to Thieu has been mounting in Saigon, and the chances of his remaining in office much longer are slim. His most vocal adversaries at the moment include former Premier Nguyen Cao Ky, former Foreign Minister Tran Van Do and Tran Quoc Buu, the head of South Vietnam's labor union, and they are backed by Father Tran Huu Thanh, a Catholic priest who has been mobilizing demonstrations against Thieu since last fall. Another faction of Thieu's foes is being led by Tri Quang, the Buddhist monk who played a part in toppling President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963. Neither of these groups can go far without the backing of the South Vietnamese military, and there is no guarantee that the Communists would sit down at the conference table with army officers. Politically, then, the situation is murky and even the departure of Thieu offers no assurance that the upheaval will end.

The victims of all this are, of course, the refugees, who may ultimately number two million. Intimidated by the threat of bombing, fearful of the Communists and harassed by South Vietnamese soldiers, they are hurtling headlong into the unknown, and it will be years before those who survive can ever return to normality. Providing them with food and medical care ought to be the American priority at the moment, and it will cost the US hundreds of millions of dollars. Congress cannot be faulted for rejecting the White House's pleas for military aid, since neither the Nixon nor the Ford administrations seriously leaned on Thieu to reach an accommodation with the Communists. That failure led directly to the present conflagration, which in turn has made so many South Vietnamese people hungry and homeless. It is to them that the US has a moral obligation.

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A Southern Democrat in the White House?
Long-Shot Jimmy Carter

by Paul R. Wieck

Atlanta

Georgia's Jimmy Carter likes to wrap up a speech by recounting perhaps the most decisive moment of his life—the close of his grueling, three-hour interview with Adm. Hyman Rickover when the pre-commissioning crews for the first two nuclear subs were being picked. After asking Carter how he stood in his class (well up), Rickover asked if he always did his best. "Not always," Carter confessed. "Why not?" the stern, tactless, brilliant Rickover asked, swinging his chair around to signal the end of the session. Carter became one of the admiral's "whiz kids" but he confides he couldn't think of a good answer to that last question over 25 years ago and then, quietly, asks his audience: "But why not the best?"

He got a standing ovation the day I heard him speak to several hundred young lawyers in Orlando, and lots of promises of support. He'll need it in Florida. That's where he'll collide with Alabama's Gov. George C. Wallace for the first time on Southern turf. He has no guarantee of a clear shot at the Alabamian in Florida but a strong showing against Wallace in the South is still a must if a Southerner is to be a viable candidate; a win could turn him into a folk hero overnight.

Like his hero Rickover, Carter is brilliant, self-disciplined, sparing in all habits except the drive for excellence in all things. He has read several books a week for years to close the gaps in the service academy education he got a quarter of a century ago, and today is fond of quoting men like Reinhold Niebuhr (he also tells young audiences he knows all the lyrics to Bob Dylan's songs). Essentially a private man who keeps his troubles to himself, he drives himself mercilessly. By early March, he'd campaigned in 21 states since January 20, a few days after he stepped down as Georgia's governor. He expects the same of his staff. "Jimmy can't understand why you can't run a perfect campaign," one top aide told me. He added, as a thoughtful footnote: "We're all getting to hate Rickover. Jimmy thinks he's Rickover but none of us think we're Jimmy Carter." At times it causes problems. Georgia reporters recall days when an aide or a reporter was left behind in some small town to fend for himself because he wasn't ready when it was time to leave. Once in the governor's mansion, his drive to succeed became a drive to accomplish, giving rise to a frequent complaint that Carter was "too rigid."

This is not the side of Carter the public sees. Carter and his photogenic family ooze the open, gentle charm and good looks one has come to except from new-breed Southern politicians. He's one of the finest one-to-one campaigners around and has bult a huge personal following in his two Georgia races by meeting personally hundreds of thousands of people. He's ready to repeat it on a national scale. "He'll shake hands with three-fourths of the voters in New Hampshire," a public official who admires Carter predicted. He has all the time it takes to win converts. There are signs he's catching on in circles no one suspected would yield any Carter backers—in California, Ann Alanson Eliaser, the only member of the Democratic National Committee to defect to Gene McCarthy in 1968, signed up; in New Hampshire, Jean Wallin, McCarthy delegate in 1968 and later DNC member; in New Mexico, Chris Brown, the hard-nosed young manager of Gov. Jerry Apodaca's 1974 campaign.

National Chairman Robert S. Strauss set him up for early exposure by creating a nonpost—national campaign manager—in 1972 and filling it with Carter. It gave him entrée coast-to-coast and he campaigned vigorously, generally making a good impression. But he was still a curiosity when thousands of Democrats gathered in Kansas City early in December. He was a governor and a Southerner too. How long since the party had nominated a governor? Well, FDR was the latest and, since his day, the paramount issues haven't been the kind dealt with in state capitals. A Southerner? In the party of blacks, browns, women and youth? Few knew much about him but candidate-shopping was big on the Kansas City agenda so they stopped by and were surprised—and pleased.

Just as a strong showing against Wallace in a Southern state is a must to make a Southerner viable, such a candidate must be legitimized by the black community back home to get the attention of liberals in the Democratic party. Texas' Lloyd Bentsen has been trying desperately to get Houston's highly respected Barbara Jordan (D) out front for him (the people who'd be influenced would rather have Jordan). Carter turned to Atlanta's popular Rep. Andrew Young (D), who caused a mild sensation at Kansas City by accompanying Carter to the California and Colorado caucuses, two of the tried and true liberal delegations. Young just sat there but that was enough. It set off a buzz of gossip—"Andy Young's supporting Carter"—for the next 24 hours. I asked Young why he was doing it. Wasn't his friend Julian Bond also making presidential

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noises? Young said he would back Carter "through Florida" because he sees in him "an authentic voice" of the South, a man who empathizes with poor black and white alike. "He deserves a look from the liberal community."

Carter's political career has its roots in the peanut growing country of south Georgia where he returned to live (Plains, population 583) in the early '50s after his father died. The family holdings were modest so he and his wife started a small business, eventually owning a cotton gin, a peanut shelling plant and a lot more acres. Carter, like many a successful small-town entrepreneur, was elected to the school board. For most, it stops there. Not for Carter. In 1962 he was 37 and successful enough to run for the state legislature in a multicounty, rural district. He learned about corrupt politicians his first time out (he never passes up a chance to oust the power brokers) when a ballot box in small, rural Quitman County on a remote stretch of the Alabama border south of Columbus, Georgia (Ft. Benning) was stuffed against him. It was enough to cost him the election but he contested the fraud and won his case.

Popular among his colleagues, his record reflects a progressive but fiscally cautious rural outlook. He fought a new six million dollar state office building, worked for state ownership of dorms at state universities, thought there was a better way to spend school funds than on driver training. By 1966 he was calling himself a "Russell Democrat," was judged by observers as a top legislator and was publicly pushed by colleagues to get into a crowded gubernatorial field against ex-Gov. Ellie Gibbs Arnall, the liberal favorite, and Lester Maddox, who had flashed onto the national scene, pick-axe in hand. Carter delayed, finally made a late entry.

He was 41 that year, the "new face" in the race and, as so often happens with a new face, he was described in almost lyrical terms. People noticed his boyish face, wide toothy smile, self-effacing style and sincerity. He was pictured as "slim and fit and moves almost at a jog." Comparisons to the late JFK were inevitable. Those were good times for Carter. He gathered a young staff around him, was popular on campuses, among younger members of the business community, among educators (eight of 10 members of the State Board of Education endorsed him). He was the clean, positive, youthful candidate. He railed against the "political bosses" who cling to power from administration to administration either for the sake of power or for personal gain. It's a theme he's continued to nurse. He came up fast in a crowded field but was edged out in the first primary by Maddox, who then went on to whip Arnall (it was generally agreed Carter could have done the same). Carter resumed his campaigning the next day.

He faced the same set of political realities in 1970 with a major difference. The Atlanta establishment again had its candidate—Carl Sanders was ready for a comeback—but Maddox was out of the picture (he couldn't succeed himself). To win, Carter went after the Maddox vote. How he did it is still a subject of debate, with Carter's people saying his basic message was the same and his critics pointing to the cheap shots he took at Sanders and the gestures he made to the Maddox (or Wallace, if you please) vote to mobilize the outstate vote against Atlanta's candidate.

Carter pledged to continue Maddox's "Little People's Day" at the governor's mansion, was quoted as saying he expected to have "strong support from the people who voted for George Wallace and the ones who voted for Lester Maddox," called Sanders and Arnall "big shots" and lashed out at the Atlanta press, which missed no opportunity to expose his tactics. Carter called himself "basically a redneck," came out against legalizing marijuana and told the state that Sanders' discourtesy to Wallace "broke down the relations of Georgia and Alabama." So much for his appeal to outstate prejudices against Atlanta's candidate. The real question is: was it a racist campaign?

Unlike Sanders, who took the black vote for granted, according to some observers, Carter never failed to campaign to blacks wherever he went and was apparently rewarded with his share of the rural and small-town black vote. Atlanta's politically sophisticated black community stuck with Sanders.

One issue Carter waffled on was privare schools, then springing up all over the South as a dodge against integration (Carter's young daughter attends a predominately black, integrated school in Plains). He first condemned them as "fly-by-night" and said he was "not in favor of putting a single dime of taxpayers' money in private schools." Later he visited one such private school in the Piedmont region of Georgia, the symbolism of which was not missed, and as the first primary drew to a close, told backers from 13 south Georgia counties gathered in Tifton for a rally not to "let anybody, including the Atlanta newspapers, mislead you into criticizing private education." There may be a question as to what kind of private education Carter meant but there can be no question what kind his audience thought he meant.

Then there were the cheap shots at Sanders. Carter's people discovered Sanders' "Count Me for Carl" buttons were recycled Humphrey buttons and ballyhooed it over the state, causing Sanders to hastily reorder. Reporters covering the campaign recall Carter backers circulated, at rallies, copies of a photo showing two black Atlanta Hawks players with their arms around Sanders, pouring champagne on his head, at a rousing dressing room celebration of the Hawks' regional championship win. By the end of the campaign, Carter's press critics were wondering what happened to "that nice young man who enchanted Georgia" in 1966.

It worked. Carter swept rural and small town Georgia, carrying 135 of 158 counties and falling just short of a clear majority in the first primary. He got 60

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percent a couple of weeks later. He still had his GOP opponent to get by, not something to be taken for granted in the heyday of Nixon's Southern popularity. He was now on the ticket with Maddox, who'd been nominated for lieutenant governor and was so convinced of his own invincibility at the polls he kept Carter at arm's length. It didn't work. Carter unabashedly embraced him. On the eve of the election, Carter was quoted as saying Maddox was "the essence of the Democratic party . . . he has compassion for the ordinary man. I'm proud to be on the ticket with him." Carter won comfortably but, for the third time in as many races, was wiped out in Fulton County (Atlanta).

A lot of people think it was unnecessary for Carter to use such tactics to get the Wallace-Maddox vote, even though it wasn't the heart of his message to Georgia voters. That vote had no place else to go in a race that was polarized between Carter and Sanders. One man put it this way: "They couldn't vote for 'cuff links Carl.'" Poor by birth, Carter had prospered and dressed immaculately, leading to caustic comments that he "never sweated." He reminded the rednecks of an Atlanta lawyer and, even if Carter threw them only a few verbal scraps, he could have won without them. Sanders himself took a few cheap shots. After trailing in the first round, he ripped off his coat and rolled up his shirtsleeves. He ridiculed Carter's claim to empathy with the rural poor, saying he'd inherited 2000 acres of land (not true) and sent the press down to look at the houses Carter's black sharecroppers lived in.

Questionable though that 1970 campaign might have been, Carter now has a four-year record to be judged, a record that contains no hint of racism but, instead, both symbolic and substantive acts of some courage. He might have embraced a reluctant Maddox on election eve but split with him shortly thereafter when Maddox became chief critic of and obstacle to the keystone of Carter's administration—government reorganization.

Carter's personal qualities come into play as an administrator. He insists that government be responsive, that it be efficient, that it set goals and try to meet them; in short, that it be the servant, not the master. By 1970 Georgia's government had proliferated into 300 separate agencies shot through with duplication, inefficiency and lack of direction. Carter's reorganization plan allowed the governor to make any changes he wanted subject only to veto by the legislature and other constitutionally elected officers. It was a bitter fight but he won—by only one vote on a crucial roll call. Four years later, he'd reduced the 300 agencies to 22, one of them the Human Resources Department, which today draws the most criticism as a "catch-all" with 30,000 employees in public health, welfare, juvenile problems, mental retardation. Carter defends its size, says it's the only way to prevent costly duplication of records, office, case workers, etc., which today eat up so much of the public monies set aside for the poor. He already has his eye on the federal system, pointing out in speeches that two million employees serve 12 million on welfare—one employee for every six recipients.

To give state government a clear sense of purpose, he instituted zero budgeting. That means every agency must justify every worker, every program, every expenditure each time its budget is drawn up—not just the new ones. He thinks the federal bureaucracy could use the same approach and wouldn't hesitate to try to put it into practice as President. It would be good news for those who've noticed how much of the work force is employed by local, state and federal government.

If one were to single out one achievement, it would probably be Governor Carter's handling of the mentally retarded. When he took office, there were 12,000 at Milledgeville, the state institution. He put a "cure oriented" man in charge, backed him when thousands were sent to new, local centers where a staff of trained professionals supervises a nonprofessional staff (some formerly on welfare) that teaches retarded children basic skills—a sharp contrast from Milledgeville where they were merely confined and the burden of numbers made it impossible to do much more than feed them. The population at Milledgeville has been cut in half. Carter defended the "open door" policy instituted there against the scare tactics of a powerful, local state senator. But later he allowed his Mental Health Divison director to be fired when he was convinced "personality" problems were getting in the way of accomplishments.

In the health field his attention turned to the "preventive" medicine. The "10 worst killers" were identified by region, economic status, etc., and various techniques of treatment were analyzed. He's convinced widespread public diagnosis doesn't need to be costly, can reach a lot of people who wouldn't normally see a doctor and would greatly improve the delivery system without the cost of the Kennedy-Jackson bill for national health insurance. He's critical of that approach as one that would merely shift the burden of payment without improving delivery and, at the same time, lead to a wide range of abuses, including overuse of services. A catastrophic illness plan, yes. For children up to six, yes. But not universal. It's not because he sympathizes with the medical profession. That's the group he fought to a one-vote victory when he was pushing through his reorganization plans and the Georgia Medical Association demanded not only a majority of the board dealing with medical problems but the right to pick them. Carter didn't agree, wouldn't give in, and won. Nor did he give in to other groups. He didn't hesitate to expose by name and affiliation the lobbyists who were opposing consumer or environmental meaures, including at times the Georgia Chamber of Commerce.

Today they'll tell you Jimmy Carter isn't that popular in Georgia, that no governor ever is when he leaves office. One of the first groups he alienated was the

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Maddox vote (there's a question as to how close an affinity they ever felt for him). They turned off when he made it clear he's dead set against racial or social discrimination against "the black, poor or rural." He had a portrait of the late Martin Luther King, Jr., hung in the capitol only a few feet from the white marble bust of another famous son of Georgia—Alexander H. Stephens, vice president of the Confederacy. Martin Luther King, Sr., now says he's for Carter and Nelson Rockefeller for President. He named prominent blacks to the state board of regents (but removed Roy Harris, a prominent Wallace politician) and the parole board. He picked a young black patrolman as one of four security men to accompany him around the state.

Those who were surprised hadn't taken a very long look at Carter's background. They'd failed to note he was the only businessman in Plains who flatly refused to join the White Citizens Council, that he once broke off campaigning to drive all night to be at his Baptist church (he's an active member, teaching Sunday school, etc.) to vote to integrate it. It's said he gets his racial attitudes from his mother, the registered nurse who went to India in the '60s as a Peace Corps volunteer.

On one occasion Carter was to speak at a Macon, Georgia country club. He received a call asking him not to bring his black security guard. Furious, Carter sent word that's just who he'd bring and, once there, lectured his audience on race relations.

Carter may be up to dealing with Washington's massive, sprawling bureaucracy, but what about his experience in foreign policy? How does he regard the Pentagon?

His basic views are acceptable within a party wracked by foreign policy divisions a few years back. He never bought the Vietnam venture, thinks no more money should go there; he wants our troops pulled out of Korea, Thailand, Taiwan, the Philippines but not Japan (it would be counterproductive because it would force that country to arm, he says); would insist on guarantees for Israel. As a Rickover disciple, he wouldn't be popular at the Pentagon. He's already charging we have more brass around now than at the end of World War II (military types argue it's necessary to keep them around so we won't have to promote the inexperienced in a time of crisis as happened after Pearl Harbor). He's aware of a lot of the sources of waste.

But fairly conventional (for a Democrat) views aren't the same as experience. What about that? Carter says he won't yield to any other candidate in that field and then talks about his "carefully prepared" trips to Europe and Latin America, drops names of chiefs of state, etc. It was the ring of the self-disciplined man striving for excellence, the man pursuing every opportunity to inform himself.In truth he does that, consulting regularly with men like former Secretary of State Dean Rusk. He serves on the Tri-Lateral Commission (US, Canada and Japan). One suspects he would still require a lot of on-the-job training but that doesn't make him any different than the rest of the field with the possible exception of Sen. Henry M. Jackson, whose views on the military aren't as comforting as Carter's.

Carter, now free of the governor's office and modestly affluent (he's probably worth $500,000), is prepared to campaign full time. His schedule was laid out weeks ago, carefully allotting time to each of the 50 states; however, the organizational work has been stepped up and more time is being planned for early primaries such as New Hampshire, where Carter has discovered it's already time to start the hand-to-hand combat. He's not writing off any state, any primary. Like McGovern before him, he wants to pick up his share everywhere.

There are obstacles, particularly at home. One is State Rep. Julian Bond (D) of Atlanta, who obviously doesn't share all the enthusiasm for Carter some of his colleagues have. Bond is still seriously considering a bid for delegates (he's saying he'll decide this summer) in what could be an effort to keep the party's left wing honest if 1976 turns out to be "the year of Wallace." Carter plans to enter the Alabama primary against Wallace; however, the districts he might win are predominately black and Bond could take them instead. Ditto, Florida. Plus problems in Tennessee. Georgia will have a primary this year and, in a three-way race between Carter, Bond and Wallace, Carter could find himself squeezed by a polarization.

Then there are the Sanders people. They're back in power. Gov. George Busbee was backed by that faction and State Chairman Marjorie Thurman is the same person Carter tried to force out as national committeewoman in 1971 because she backed Sanders in the primary. She stuck it out until her term expired in 1972 and was then replaced; however, she's back in power. Carter claims they've assured him they won't stand in his way but they're not out front, either. A Bond candidacy could provide a convenient outlet for some of them. As for the Atlanta business establishment, Carter's relations are a lot better than they were back in 1970 and when he was campaigning against that city's banks, newspapers and business establishment in order to mobilize the rural vote. A number of key members of the Chamber of Commerce and partners in large law firms turned out for a recent fund raiser that netted $100,000.

Carter is a long shot but not as long a shot as he was six months ago when the idea of a Southern governor other than Wallace emerging as a major candidate in the primaries seemed bizarre. The odds have now shifted. It remains for Carter to convince the voters that he has the depth of knowledge beyond structural reform or good instincts, that's expected of a President. Meanwhile, it's well to keep in mind the comment of his campaign manager who said, "We're selling a style and a personality, not an emotional issue."

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Stanley Kauffmann on theater

Old, New and Papp

The Misanthrope (St. James). This Moliere production of the (British) National Theater was heralded by much trumpeting but comes pretty close to disaster. The adaptation by Tony Harrison, set in Paris of 1966, is a mistake. The modern diction and the forced rhymes ("for" with "Goncourt") might be tolerated; but the details of the story and the values of the characters simply don't transplant.

When Oronte in 1666 insists on reading his new poem to Alceste, he is an egocentric member of his society. When Oronte in 1966, in dinner jacket, in a slick drawing room, does the same thing, he seems an eccentric buffoon, near insanity. The Alceste of 1666, who hates the hypocrisy and fawning he sees all around him, represents a reaction against the vices of courtly protocol; he means something to us by analogy with his context. But when Alceste is transposed to 1966 he loses his context and can't affect us; he just seems terribly naive. Antigone in old Thebes is a heroine who inspires us today; Antigone in modern Greece would seem something of a nut.

The acting doesn't help. Alec McCowen is an actor of some technical snap but little innate power or color. His Alceste, instead of being a grave soul-sickened man, is an irascible egotist, a kind of schoolteacher who can't stand being crossed and who makes his points by screaming. We can't understand why Célimène should ever have cared for him.

Célimène is Diana Rigg, familiar from films and TV, a very competent and vigorous actress with wit and appeal, who plays the role, complete with thin cigar, like a Noel Coward hostess. Célimène is one of the most interesting women in Molière, a 20-year-old widow who loves this odd older man but who is just really discovering her sexuality and its power and who finally opts for the exploration of that power instead of solitariness with the man she still loves. But Rigg isn't discovering much; at the very beginning she looks as if she had had six men for dinner and the night was young. The whole text and subtext of Molière is lost between her competence and McCowen's incompetence. (Also she has a touch of what the English call a "common" accent: "A fine compliment *thot* is.")

Robert Eddison is pleasing as the friendly Philinte, but the director, John Dexter, keeps him standing about all night like a guard at Buckingham Palace. In general Dexter has worked with obtrusive symmetries and posed compositions that might have been passable in costume but make the modern setting all the more uneasy. And that shiny setting, with slanted stage and inexplicable swirls of drapery from the ceiling, made me uneasy in itself.

Same Time, Next Year (Atkinson). Two characters, one set, 24 years. (Remember *The Fourposter*?) The first scene, 1951, has a man and a woman, married but not to each other, waking up in a California hotel bed. Subsequently they re-meet once a year on the anniversary of the first meeting. (Remember *Avanti!*?) We see them every fifth year, so they act as chroniclers of costume, custom and lingo. Between the scenes we get taped montages of then-current hits and public utterances. (Evidently Nixon tapes are going to be standard fare for facile satirists of the *Shampoo* stripe.) The vein is sentimental "honest" comedy like Neil Simon but with nothing like the funny cracks of Simon at his best. Bernard Slade, the debutant playwright, displays ingenuity only in the way he has thought up twists and turns to keep the anniversary scenes from being repetitious. Including one sight gag—at the woman's entrance in one scene—that gave me my only real laugh.

But despite this ingenuity the play wears thin as it goes, and thinner in retrospect, because it becomes increasingly clear that Slade had only one motive for writing it. Good playwrights certainly have that motive (money), but they also have other reasons. Once Slade got his gimmick, which is all it turns out to be, he was then forced to think of ways to stuff it two-hours-worth full. Some of the stuffing is comment about spouses, children, Vietnam, psychoanalysis, offstage death, women's lib, etc., but it's all adventitious; the play isn't really *about* any of those things any more than a juggler's act is about ninepins. The sole real point of the play is to keep going—long enough to occupy a whole evening and be a hit. (Which it is.) Slade even brings in the old-style Broadway fake ending 30 seconds before the real ending.

Half of the cast, Ellen Burstyn, shows as she has shown in several films that she is an actress of humanity and ability, concerned to make her work legitimate. I didn't believe much in the character Slade wrote, an Italian Catholic who meets her lover annually instead of going to an annual retreat, but I believed a lot in Burstyn. On the other hand she shows, again as she showed in films, insufficient personality to be a star. She's good enough; but there's no override, no extra excitement or tingle to her.

The other actor is Charles Grodin, who was in the films *The Heartbreak Kid* and *11 Harrowhouse* and who has neither tingle nor legitimacy, only some cabaret-sketch mannerisms and some trick gestures. Instead of saying "I feel so guilty," he says "I feel so," then semaphores with his arms, then says "guilty." The same trick, over and over.

This play proves again what was clear in a 1972 romantic comedy, Randall's *6 Rms Riv Vu*. If you go to such a play with no serious expectations, which is the only way to go, you can possibly have a couple of hours of actor-charm, such as Margaret Sullavan and Elliott Nugent provided 30 years ago in the equivalent *Voice of the Turtle*. But Randall's play and Slade's play suffer from hard times: Broadway just doesn't have the personnel any more for charm shows.

(continued on page 32)

Films Worth Seeing

A Brief Vacation. De Sica directs Florinda Bolkan superbly in this tale of a young working woman's self realization. Mushy but moving.

Donkey Skin. Catherine Deneuve in a French musical fairy tale. It all floats by very pleasantly.

Hearts and Minds. A Vietnam documentary. Politically unclear, still with grim power.

The Love of Life. Documentary of Arthur Rubinstein. Eighty-eight terrific years.

Scenes from a Marriage. Bergman compressed his 300-minute Swedish TV series into three hours. But it's Bergman. And Liv Ullmann.

SK

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Reconsideration

Oona O'
by Thomas Gallagher

(Atheneum; $4.50)

The death of the novel, discussed so avidly and at such length in the academic quarterlies better than a decade ago, is today no longer even an issue. It is granted, even assumed, that the novel is dead or dying as a literary form. And whether that is or isn't true, it is nevertheless statistical fact that the novel is dead or dying as a *publishing* form. Fewer are being issued each season, and certainly fewer are bought. The big books today are works of journalism or instant history. The works of fiction that sell best and most consistently are thrillers and jet-set fantasies—entertainments of one kind or another. While all this may bring a certain perverse satisfaction to some critics, seeing their literary judgment vindicated so dramatically in economic terms, it has brought many more novelists to desperation and beyond that to the point where it may seem pointless even to continue writing fiction.

One of the latter, apparently, is Thomas Gallagher. Between 1952 and 1964 this New York-born, Irish-American writer published three novels, all of remarkable quality. In the 10 years since the last and best of them, *Oona O'*, no better American novel, I think, has appeared. To call it perfect or exquisite, adjectives that it deserves but come hard to me, might suggest that it is a kind of still-born masterpiece, the sort of lifeless triumph in which so little is ventured that all is gained. Nothing of the kind. Although it is a short book, *Oona O'* pulses with life. Oona O' Hagen, of the title, is the sort of vivid female character that American male novelists are said never to be able to create—impulsive, self-destructively romantic, yet at the same time capable of brutal honesty with herself—enormously attractive. Yet her appearance—and she fairly explodes from the novel—was barely noticed by reviewers and readers in 1964. Perhaps the book came out the wrong season, or too close to Christmas, or whatever; but for all the impression it made on the literary public, *Oona O'* might just as well have been dropped down a well. Except for a small paperback edition put out by Avon the following year, it sank without a trace.

Since then Thomas Gallagher has published *The X-Craft Raid*, a nonfiction anecdote of World War II detailing the sinking of the German battleship *Graf Spee* by British midget submarines (he had some success earlier with *Fire at Sea*, an account of the *Morro Castle* disaster) and the very recent *Assault in Norway* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $6.95), the story of a wartime commando raid. There have also been assorted bits and pieces of journalism appearing in magazines. But no fiction. In the recently and posthumously published memoir, *Words & Faces*, Hiram Haydn, who apparently served as editor on all Gallagher's books, makes reference to a long novel on which the writer has worked off and on since 1957. I hope Gallagher finishes it, but considering the nonreception accorded *Oona O'*, it will be easy to understand if he doesn't. A novelist needs not so much the encouragement of good reviews as at least the sense of an audience out there for his work. Without it, the process of communication, of which writing is only half, can never be complete. Haydn talks of Gallagher warmly, admiringly and at length, and he confesses bewilderment at the latter's failure to attract a public with his fiction. And while Haydn can't really account for it, except to suggest him as a victim of changing tastes, he declares Gallagher—quite rightly, I think—to be "among our best novelists."

All this must be especially difficult for Gallagher, for he made a very hopeful beginning. As is so often the case, the first of his novels, *The Gathering Darkness*, attracted the most attention, even though it is much the weaker of the three. (It is part of the American youth sickness, I think, to welcome new talent and then to pretend that subsequent work never quite measures up—but let that pass.) This one has the faults of many first novels: overearnestness, and a tendency toward the melodramatic in the portrayal of its heroine. But its very real virtues shone through. And reviewers remarked upon the intensity of Gallagher's feeling for his characters and situations, and the sure sense of family (as a unit of human frustration) that informs the entire novel. And in the end the extra notice given *The Gathering Darkness* won it not only a couple of thousand more readers than the average first novel receives, but a National Book Award nomination as well.

In his second novel, *The Monogamist*, published in 1957, Gallagher maintained the general qualities shown in *The Gathering Darkness* and wrote what was, at the same time, an infinitely better book. Again this one is a novel of Irish-American family life. The focus, in this case, is on the father, John Wisher, and on his adulterous affair with a Juilliard student. At 60 he is choosing life, recklessly pursuing a course that seems doomed to end disastrously, tragically—and it does, of course. Yet his gesture, their gesture together, is a grand one, almost heroic in context—even though it seems ugly and shabby to Wisher's son, Mike. Is Mike simply too young? Would he ever understand? Eventually he does, but only when it is too late. There is a sense in *The Monogamist*, as there is in all of Gallagher's novels, of a cold, almost malign Providence at work—a Deity not too far removed from Hardy's ruthless President of the Universe. Without explicit knowledge, and without benefit of tendentious declarations from his characters, you get the feeling that, in spite of the milieu he describes, these are the novels of a fallen-away Catholic, one who has said goodbye to all that.

I mention the earlier novels merely to put *Oona O'* in its proper context. For although they are in themselves interesting enough (*The Monogamist*, a truly good book in its own right, is certainly more than just interesting), neither of them, singly or together, could sustain Thomas Gallagher's reputation and justify this look back at his work. I believe, however, that *Oona O'* does precisely that. Even considered technically it is a remarkable book, as sure an advance on the *The Monogamist* as that one was on *The Gathering Darkness*. And Gallagher's art in it consists precisely in making it seem a book utterly without art, a narrative spun out effortlessly (or so it appears) in letters, sharply realized scenes, and a minimum of exposition. If the novel really is dead, literary archeologists in the next century might do well to unearth *Oona O'* just to see to what a nice state the narrative art had been refined before it pitched rather suddenly

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Poetry
FROM WESLEYAN

Judith Hemschemeyer

Very Close and Very Slow

Judith Hemschemeyer's second book of poems *Very Close and Very Slow* are as carefully written, as lovingly shaped as were those of her first book *I Remember the Room Was Filled With Light* (1973), but they are more personal in theme, more urgent in tone. In this work the poet confronts birth and death, a suicide, love and hate with an energy and a forcefulness that involve the reader almost painfully. Yet throughout the book, even in the most harrowing poems, there are moments of beauty and humor, of a wholeness of experience that makes her work so distinctive.

The Wesleyan Poetry Program, Volume 76.
Cloth $6.00; Paper $3.45

Charles Wright

Bloodlines

The sources of Charles Wright's book *Bloodlines* are autobiographical, but the poems are not simply remembrances of times past, not simply recollections of his people, his growing up, his growing away; they are virtuosic recreations in image and sound of the sources themselves.

The heart of the book lies in the balance between the two long central sequences of poems, *Tattoos* and *Skins*, the one specific, graphic, the other thematic, musical, each subtly referring to the other, enriching the other. The whole is an elegant and intensely imaginative recapturing of a life.

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into decline.

In the beginning the story unfolds slowly, rather like a mystery. Jim O'Hagen, Oona's brother, and his wife, Nancy, her best friend, hear from her by mail after she has suddenly flown off to Italy. It develops that she has gone off pregnant in the company of an eye surgeon named Tony Friedensohn ("a movie star with an MD," she calls him), the father of the child she is expecting. He is married to an Italian woman, a very rich Italian woman, and has gone back to arrange a separation from her and to wind up his affairs in Italy in order to return to America with Oona. Of course it's not to be. Tony's wife is strong willed, obdurate and rich; she holds him more or less by the ear and dismisses Oona with an admonition: "You should manage your affairs more intelligently, Miss O'Hagen."

Their baby will not dismiss quite so easily. With no money and no other choice, really, Oona stays on in the villa Tony Friedensohn rented for her outside Florence and has her baby there alone, in the middle of the night, with not even the neighbor woman around to help her. The childbirth is a remarkable scene, a tour de force, if you will, for Gallagher can't have written from much experience (he is no doctor, after all). Yet at the same time it is not the least lurid or overwritten, simply direct and controlled. Afterward:

> *She came to on the floor as a doctor arrived from Fiesole. Either the milk woman had told a confused story, or the doctor, being Italian himself had made allowances for exaggeration. He carried Oona to the bedroom and laid her—almost on top of the baby—on the bed. He did not know, that is, or believe, that she had already had the baby, and when she showed him, and he saw the ribbons [where she had cut the umbilical cord], he didn't lose his head, he became—there was no other word for it*—triumphant, *a much larger and more expansive man. First in a very deep baritone voice, he said, "Ah!" Then swaggering back and forth with the most wonderful play of emotions, Oona thought, around his eyes and mouth, he kept saying, "Instinct! Instinct! Instinct!" as though by cutting the cord she had freed* him *of something.*

The name of the doctor is Elio Maderini, "an elderly man with a huge bathrobe of a body, a red tweedy face that he seemed almost to think with, and a soft baritone voice that insinuated itself past all kinds of barriers." His subsequent visits provide the novel with some of its nicest moments. He comes soon to admire, even to love, this impulsive girl who lives "right where tragedy became absurdity." It is only through the agency of Dr. Maderini in Italy, and with the help of her brother Jim and his wife, that Oona is even able to leave Italy with her baby: the American consulate in Florence is not very cooperative.

But she does make it back to America, illegitimate babe in arms, and the rest of the novel concerns the adjustment of her family, an ordinary sort of west-side Irish family, to her situation. The onus is on them, for with Oona, as always, it's "never apologize, never explain." And for the most part the O'Hagens come through pretty well. As with most crises, family or otherwise, this one brings out the best in the best of them and the worst in the worst.

That, really, is what this novel is all about—characters in situations, humans in stress. Maderini, the O'Hagens, even the weak Tony Friedensohn are damned or saved as they respond to the reckless Oona O' who roars through their lives like some existential force, testing them, just as she does herself, from one moment to the next: "Her expectations never went beyond the immediate future, which was why she was so demanding of the present."

Perhaps the moribund condition of the novel today, its death as a *publishing* form—is due to the fact that so few of them deal as frankly and directly as does *Oona O'* with characters, their relationships, and the situations that test them. Readers have come no longer even to expect the qualities a Thomas Gallagher offers in novels like these—and so, I suppose, such books as his are very easily overlooked. He, in any case, has written no more and it is hard to say whose loss is greater, his or ours. Ours, I think.

Bruce Cook

Bruce Cook is staff writer on film and music for *The National Observer.*

Coming
Denis Donoghue
on Sean O'Casey

Frank Kermode:
Letter from London

Charles R. Larson:
The African Writer

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Father and Son

A Map of Misreading by Harold Bloom

(Oxford University Press; $8.95)

This is an exceptionally subtle and complex work which, it seems to me, is doing several things at once. Whatever I pick as a quotation to start from seems to give a wrong impression of the book's tenor. But on the author's own authority, I'll try this:

> *Let me reduce my argument to the hopelessly simplistic; poems, I am saying, are neither about "subjects" nor about "themselves." They are necessarily about* other poems; *a poem is a response to a poem, as a poet is a response to a poet, or a person to his parent. Trying to write a poem takes the poet back to the origins of what a poem* first was for him, *and so takes the poet back beyond the pleasure principle to the decisive initial encounter and response that began him. . . .* Only a poet challenges a poet as poet, *and so only a poet makes a poet. To the poet-in-a-poet a poem is always* the other man, *the precursor, and so a poem is always a person, always the father of one's Second Birth. To live, the poet must* misinterpret *the father, by the crucial act of misprision, which is the re-writing of the father.*

Primarily, it seems to me, the stress is upon the relation between the poet's poetic "precursor" and the poet as an "ephebe" who resents being "belated" with reference to his origins. But just as the dead precursor lives on in him, so his poems in turn are "refusals of mortality. Every poem therefore has two makers: the precursor, and the ephebe's rejected mortality."

Bloom plays down a concern with the kinds of "anxiety" deriving from the fact that, in many cases, the poet's choice of vocation involves a quite painful and conscious break with his actual parents who, at the very least, were grieved by his alternative lineage. However this turn is considered near the end of the book in the case of Whitman's "Sea Drift," which amounts to a reconciliation with his deceased father (in a poem that reflected anxiety over the threatened loss of the "inspiration" characteristic of the poetic posturing in, say, the "Song of Myself"). And the problems to do with poetic breakaway trends in general are not given the constant attention that, it seems to me, any radical rejection of one's parental judgments requires.

Just how such problems of "ancestry" relate to the forbears of critics is not an issue in this book. It seems to me that such things are left dangling by this kind of summarizing sentence: "As literary history lengthens, all poetry necessarily becomes verse-criticism, just as all criticism becomes prose-poetry"—whereat we dare assume that, on many occasions, Bloom would like his criticism to be viewed thus, and rightly so.

Another line enters from the pedagogic angle:

> *All literary tradition has been necessarily élitist, in every period, if only because the Scene of Instruction always depends upon a primal choosing and a being chosen, which is what "élite" means. . . . No teacher, however impartial he or she attempts to be, can avoid choosing among students, or being chosen by them, for this is the very nature of teaching. Literary teaching is precisely like literature itself; no strong writer can choose his precursors until first he is chosen by them, and no strong student can fail to be chosen by his teachers. . . . What is the particular inescapability of literary tradition for the teacher who must go out to find himself as a voice in the wilderness? Is he to teach* Paradise Lost *in preference to the Imamu Amiri Baraka?*

Bloom turns up with an ingenious bit of diplomacy here when he proposes to feature Milton's Satan as "representative of the entire canon when he challenges us to challenge Heaven with him." But how about the precursors of teachers? When, for instance, we think of Matthew Arnold's deference to his own distinguished academic father, what of its relation to *Sohrab and Rustum*, where father and son engage in combat unaware ("unconscious"?) of their identity, and the father slays the son? In brief I'd like to read more about the ways in which the *poetic* genealogy of "influence" relates to the motives of actual biological genealogy. For the most part, it seems to me, Bloom keeps the two lines too distinct.

In particular I am puzzled about his comments on Browning's grotesque fantasy, "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came." Let me quote a few brilliantly impressionistic descriptions (there are many more of the same sort): "his perverse and negative stance . . . a turning against the self . . . a quest for failure is a synecdoche for suicide . . . its 'realism' a pure self-imposition . . . an inward impulse [suicidal self-punishment] . . . yielding to instinctual demands that his ego-ideal finds objectionable . . . we feel, as readers, that death must be at hand . . . to accept his place in the company of the ruined . . . sacrificed, not to the energies of art, but to the near-solipsist's tragic victory over himself . . . Childe Roland dies, if he dies" (a reference particularly worth considering in the light of the traditional association between death and sexual orgasm).

Add now such considerations as these: Bloom has already quoted Freud's notion that writing, "which consists in allowing a fluid to flow out upon a piece of white paper," has "acquired the symbolic meaning of coitus," hence "is as though forbidden sexual behavior were thereby being indulged in." But we should recall that usually in our tradition the conscience-stricken poetic "ephebe" (an adolescent just before manhood) such as Browning was, chooses his calling as a writer prior to the conveniences of coitus, though an independent form of indulgence was available. Add also the thought that, going Freud one better (or one worse) there is the proverbial expression, "As I take pen in hand." And recall Bloom's own assurance that "The poet-in-a-poet *cannot marry*, whatever the person-in-a-poet chooses to have done." In the light of all that, go back and read the previous paragraph—and surely Bloom was providing all we needed for the suggestion that this wayward poem by a mature monologue-artist is a fantasy of onanism (for Bloom also stresses the fact that poets are forever going back to their origins, and most such vocations originate during the lonesome passionate severities of adolescence).

Of course I could quote many similar lines from the poem itself, including above all the stanza in which the poet even signs his name, as the "Childe" nears the squat "brown" turret where he "came," as announced in what Bloom calls "Roland's final act of blowing his slughorn." But I would not agree to interpret the Childe's ruined "Band" as "precursors" in Bloom's sense. They, along with the "ominous tract" (that will stand for what Bloom brilliantly calls the Childe's "ordeal, his trial by landscape") and the many incidental gnarled figures, are all tautologies, embodying the

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rhetorical principle of amplification, various repetitions of the same sinister theme that is, in sum, a highly dramatized exaggeration (or "hyperbole," to use a term that Bloom does exceptionally well by) for this temporary fanciful "return" to the exacting conditions under which his "poetic ancestry" took form. Here is another notable respect in which the motivations of the poetic breakaway are not dealt with throughout; yet one can't deny that they are there.

Two other major fields should still be considered. Having glancingly noted that Vico and I stress the four "major tropes" (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony), Bloom adds hyperbole and metalepsis (or transumption). And he does wonders by them all. I started this review on that theme. But I abandoned that start because it involves issues too specifically literary for a general approach to the book. As I understand Bloom's added emphasis, atop the stylistic exaggeration (hyperbole) of the "Childe's" temporary imaginary return to guilt-laden origins (essentially experienced as a relationship to his actual parents as vs. his new poetic unnaturalization), I'd take it that metalepsis, or transumption, would involve considerations of this sort.

The *Phaedrus* takes us from seed in the sense of sheer sperm to the heights of the Socratic erotic, as transcendently embodied in the idea of doctrinal insemination. And similarly, via hyperbole and metalepsis, we'd advance from an ephebe's sheer *physical* release to a *poetically* ejaculatory analogue, implicit in the imagery of Childe Roland's hornblow.

There is at least one more major strand that should be mentioned in a review (the "news") of this exceptionally and admirably subtle and complex work. Whereas, in my *Rhetoric of Religion*, for the start of things I had been content to borrow secular "logological" analogies from the opening chapters of Genesis, Bloom prefers a "logocentric" version by Isaac Luria, "a sixteenth-century master of theosophical speculation," who "formulated a regressive theory . . . in a revision of the earlier Kabbalistic emanation theory." In any case we coincide to the extent that his "Lurianic story" contains "a vision of creation-as-catastrophe," and mine builds around the orthodox biblical account that integrally connects the "Creation" with the "Fall." Maybe we could settle for this quotation from Coleridge's *Table Talk:* "A Fall of some sort or other—the creation, as it were, of the non-absolute—is the fundamental postulate of the moral history of man."

Bloom announces that he intends to do more with Luria's visionary ways. I am sure that the job of following him will be well worth the effort of any reader who, along with both poetry and poetics, also loves criticism in general for its own sake.

Kenneth Burke

Kenneth Burke, distinguished American critic, is author of *Philosophy of Literary Form, A Grammar of Motives, The Rhetoric of Religion* (University of California Press), a novel, short stories and poetry.

Half Lesson

Watchmen in the Night by Theodore C. Sorensen

(MIT Press; $8.95)

"Watergate is like a Rorschach," Aaron Wildavsky observed at a Washington seminar last year. "If you want to know what anyone thinks is wrong with the country, ask him what Watergate has to teach us."

Theodore Sorensen bears out that thesis: it was not that Richard Nixon was too *strong* a President that led to the Watergate abuses, argues John Kennedy's White House special counsel; on the contrary it was that he was too *weak, i.e.*, "he was not in the mold of Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln, the two Roosevelts, and others."

That he was not. Nor was he in the mold of Millard Fillmore and Calvin Coolidge. But Sorensen has a point to make, and he does it in the way Ben Sonnenberg once described the art of successful public relations: "First, throw your dart. Next, draw a circle around it. That was the target."

Sorensen is not without strategic purpose in this treatise, the outgrowth of lectures given last fall at MIT. He came to political maturity in the school that holds that there has never been anything wrong with the country that a good strong President couldn't set right. The accession of a not-so-good President—but one nevertheless capable of using the sinews of his powerful office for ends inimical to the democratic process—has clearly confronted the author and other members of the school for strong presidencies with a doctrinal dilemma.

Sorensen acknowledges that problem, at a personal level, in his preface:

> *I helped write John Kennedy's speeches on a strong Presidency and helped him forge the legal tools of a stronger Presidency in the mistaken belief that what was good for the Presidency would inevitably be good for the country.*

The style is reminiscent: New Frontier, playing off the simplism of Engine Charlie Wilson. Or, again: "Nixon kept saying that the charges against him raised fundamental questions about our whole concept of the Presidency; and in my heart I know he's right." This is vintage Sorensen, of the turning phrase, familiar to all who recall his contribution to those dazzling exercises in presidential persuasion of the early 1960s.

Central to this exercise is Sorensen's laundry list of suggested institutional reforms to make the presidency more "accountable" without diminishing its power. He believes Congress must show more "guts" in carrying out its constitutional role; that the press must remain vigilant (his defense of leaks-in-government is the liveliest section of the book); and that the judiciary must assert itself more vigorously as a check against executive authority.

Yet, too often, the author's stylistic whorls and semantic inversions posed problems for this reviewer—not unlike those I sometimes encountered on reexamining the presidential speeches he helped craft, after their initial dazzle had faded.

"No doubt," Sorensen confesses at one point, "my view of the Nixon Presidency is distorted by bias." He does admit he was "mistaken" in his simplistic faith regarding the absolute virtue of presidential power. Given that fresh insight, a pre-Nixon White House aide of his ability and experience might provide instruction far more valuable than anything a Dean or Magruder could impart at this advanced stage of the public's post-Watergate education.

The Nixon presidency has been anatomized as has no presidency gone before. But if we know the Nixon White House better than any other, what of its predecessors? If a lawyer (as distinguished from a journalist like George Reedy) of Sorensen's unique back-

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ground were now to apply his critical faculties to the subject of presidential power-before-Nixon, what might we learn about the institutional genesis of Watergate?

That question, of course, presupposes recognition of a link between the criminal excesses of Nixon's White House and the growth of presidential power during the previous half-century of war and domestic emergency. It suggests that whatever Nixon's failings as a national leader, he was not a mere aberration but an inevitability; that if there had been no Nixon in 1972, there would have been some future "strong" President to cross the line between bugging a foreign embassy (for "national security" reasons) and bugging his domestic political opposition (for "national security" reasons).

Sorensen, however, remains stylistic but contradictory on this question. In a chapter titled "Was Nixon an Aberrant?" he first tempts the reader:

> *I cannot deny, based on my own heady atmosphere in the White House, that the same conditions and motivations that led to Watergate could well recur. The dangers it symbolized did not begin and will not end with Richard Nixon.*

But after only that brief reference to his "own experience," he again shifts into high imagery:

> *An overreaction to [Nixon's] singular deeds in the form of drastic institutional or structural alterations [in the presidency] would be equally dangerous. But as John Dean said in his famous warning to Nixon, there is a 'cancer growing in the White House.' Cancers being hard to curb completely, this one was not wholly terminated in 1974. I now realize I saw traces of it in 1964. Unless we act, it could reach Orwellian proportions by 1984.*

Well, then, *does* the author consider Nixon an aberrant? It would appear from this passage that he does not. Yet, at a later point, Sorensen goes to some lengths to establish that our 37th President was not only an institutional mutant, but even a political accident! (He would never have been elected in 1968, you see, if only. . . .)

Indeed this passage encapsulates both the recurrent theme and pervasive flaw contained in this book. Why, pray tell, "1964"—rather than, say 1962 or 1963, the halcyon years of the author's "own experience" in "that heady atmosphere"? There are two possibilities. First, that Sorensen chose to sacrifice substance for digital symmetry. Second, that despite his profession of "mistake," the author is unable to overcome his bias, not simply as an old Nixon adversary but as a polemicist for the Kennedy presidency and its legacy.

"Emotions (*re* Watergate) may still run too high to permit a careful and objective evaluation of long-standing institutional arrangements," Sorensen says. "But we cannot ignore the problem."

No, we cannot. But neither do we "learn" from Watergate through texts that face up only to that part of the lesson that gives comfort to an author's partisan predispositions.

Victor Gold

Victor Gold is a syndicated columnist whose columns appear in many newspapers in this country.

Grunt's Viewpoint

American Boys by Steven Phillip Smith

(Putnam; $8.95)

No great work of American literature has emerged from the wreckage of Vietnam, and perhaps none ever will. The cool eye of the camera told us that the real Vietnam consisted of defoliated jungles, bomb-pocked rice paddies, squalid refugee camps and GIs going home in plastic body bags.

Perhaps somewhere in the jungles and mountains of that troubled land a Vietnamese soldier is compiling an account that will one day be the *War and Peace* of his nation, but no American novelist could ever hope to create such an epic. Suffering unredeemed by a larger purpose will never be a theme of great literature.

The images recorded by the camera, so vivid at the time, have begun to fade. The historian will one day tell us what happened, but the novelist must tell us what it was like being an American soldier in Vietnam. Steven Phillip Smith has attempted to do that in his first novel and has largely succeeded. Although he fails to sustain his description and characterization sufficiently for us to develop a strong sense of place and person, the language, vignettes and attitudes of American soldiers are authentic and frequently enthralling.

Four young soldiers meet on the Trenton-to-Newark train and subsequently team up, volunteering for assignment to Europe. They go to Fulda Gap, Germany, suffer from the boredom of garrison life and volunteer for Vietnam a short time after the first American combat troops have landed there. If the situation seems stock, so do the characters: a college football jock who likes to kill, a black pulled between his artistic inclinations and street-fighting realities, a college drop-out who tosses away academic values and experience and a Minnesota farm boy who discovers those values and hungers for the experience the ex-Berkeley student gave up. All that is missing is that standard World War II scene where the private, about to go into combat for the first time, turns to his sergeant and says, "Gee, Sarge, I'm scared." (To which the sergeant inevitably replies: "That's all right, son. So am I.")

Although the approach is reminiscent of the novels of other wars, the content is not. Vietnam was unique in the American experience, and the author is at his best when he describes the attitudes and frustrations of soldiers in pursuit of an enemy who is everywhere and yet nowhere. They rarely encounter him face to face; more often than not, they simply fire at trees, bushes and mountains where they suspect he may be hiding. When they finally do see a rifleman in the open shooting at their helicopters, all their rockets and machine gun bullets cannot kill him; a squad of infantry is sent in, but they cannot find him. They presume he must be dead but then he reappears, fires several shots and once again disappears. The Minnesotan tries to calculate the cost of the ammunition fired at this one man by his two-helicopter team and then ruminates: "Add the other three pairs of gunships like Webster's, and you got a combined total, conservative estimate, of fifty thousand five hundred dollars, not counting postage and handling. The B-52s would surely push it over a hundred—making the man worth more than Willie Mays—and yet he knew, come morning, the man would be dancing on his pile of rubble after

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expending probably four dollars' worth of thirty-caliber shells." The rifleman is the perfect symbol of the enemy that pinned down and frustrated the world's most powerful military machine.

Although Smith is relating the war from a grunt's point of view, his insight into the way American officials saw Vietnam is mercilessly accurate:

The war was sport, the helicopters a new offense the coach needed to test, Vietnam a place to test it, where, even if it failed, the old plays could be used again to assure triumph. The country was a field that no one would regret chewing up; the people were insignificant—bush-league players whose loss would be felt by no one. And the coaches had their own eager young players who swallowed without question the platitudes about the importance of the game.

Yet the enemy never played the game the way America's coaches and players wanted it played. Although we were there ostensibly to help the Vietnamese people, the elusiveness of the Vietcong and North Vietnamese army made *the people* the enemy as far as many GIs were concerned. So when an unarmed 12-year-old boy, apparently frightened by the low-flying helicopter, starts running, the pilot kills him with the grenade launcher. His explanation? "If it runs, you kill it. You know that. They start their whores at twelve, and the soldiers ain't much older."

An American sergeant invites two Vietnamese sergeants to drink with him and then tries to choke one of them to death. Another soldier pulls him off the man, an officer comes upon the scene but no charges are ever filed. An attempted murder of an "ally" results in no punishment: even the army seems to regard the Vietnamese sergeant as "just a gook." In an earlier passage the author describes how this attitude developed among so many Americans:

The Cong and NVAs were their enemy, but the South Vietnamese were just as bad. Stupid, shiftless, smelly. Giving aid and comfort to the enemy, therefore enemies themselves. Everyone knew the VC controlled the ground at night, so the dumb-ass peasants had to be in cahoots with them. Why not kill the bastards? Why not kill the children, too, since they were nothing but future VC? Why not the women, for that matter? Hadn't the first recorded kill of the division been a woman carrying grenades in Ia Drang Valley?

The characters in this book are forgettable; indeed we barely get to know them. But perhaps that is the real point. The individual stories of these soldiers were of no consequence to the army that trained, equipped and "processed" them. They were interchangeable parts, shipped to Vietnam to keep the machine in working order and shipped home when either their one-year contracts or their bodies gave out. Though the book does lack the sustained energy of more polished war novels, it does not lack insight into the army's bloodless machinations in this most bloody war. Reading *American Boys* may be an emotionally draining experience, but it will leave you with some feeling for what it was like being a GI in Vietnam.

Peter J. Ognibene

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Word Play

No Loaves, No Parables: Liberal Politics and the American Language by Clifford Adelman

(Harper's Magazine Press; $7.95)

One of the great riddles of contemporary politics is why American liberals have repeatedly failed to translate support for their programs into victories for their candidates. True, Watergate and the economic mess did give us an unusually left-leaning Congress this year, but one still gets the feeling that the liberals can be trusted to find a way to lose the 1976 presidential race. Why their impotence? This book attempts a provocative answer: liberals, Clifford Adelman argues, have failed because of their language, because they have not known, or have not cared, how to communicate with the voters. As much as Spiro Agnew or Ron Ziegler, the "Newlibs" (Adelman's infelicitous term) have been guilty of cliché, euphemism and stereotype and have used rhetoric to hide rather than reveal. Politicians like Eugene McCarthy, John Lindsay and George McGovern—and their leading supporters, speechwriters, and image makers—spoke only to the already convinced, with catchwords that both shut them off from the reality of daily working-class life and shut the average American off from support of their progressive programs.

Adelman, an assistant professor of communications, writes as a veteran observer and participant in the great political crusades of the late '60s and early '70s. He considers himself a "progressive populist," a barroom-floor liberal like Jimmy Breslin, one of his confessed "political culture heroes." (His other idols are Robert Kennedy, Saul Alinsky and Norman Mailer—because he sees them all as masters of the art of touching the concerns of the average man.) With an admirable faith in the essential progressivism of the American people, Adelman emphatically rejects the thesis of Richard Scammon and Ben Wattenberg that liberals must move to the center to win. All they need to do is to "appear to care" about the working class; it is a matter of style and rhetoric,

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to be sure, but to Adelman, style and rhetoric are what count.

"Conservative liberals" (his word for people like McCarthy and Lindsay) have offered Americans "neither loaves nor parables," neither concrete programs that address their concerns nor "symbolic reductions to help comprehend the raging world." Adelman convincingly cites some of the linguistic monstrosities perpetrated in the name of liberalism: the seven most common verbs in McGovern campaign speeches and literature were "accomplish," "alleviate," "comprehend," "compensate," "discredit," "manipulate," "misdirect." Where are the simple, forceful Anglo-Saxon words? Are liberals' clichés like "misplaced priorities," "vested interests," "senseless violence," any more informative than "protective reaction strikes," or are they too cover-ups and substitutes for real thought?

Adelman's own rhetorical style deserves comment here. This is a tortured, problematic, self-conscious book, at least one-third too long, packed with trivial details of campaigns long past and confusing switches of time and place. The author makes his simple and convincing point in a most roundabout way, by peering through the prisms of three campaigns he knew firsthand: McCarthy in Illinois in spring 1968 (a down), Mailer-Breslin in New York's mayoralty race of 1969 (a high), and McGovern in the waning days of fall 1972 (rock bottom). He is his own main character; he portrays himself as campaigner, as disaffected hanger-on, as objective-reporter-who-picks-up-the-pieces. His stream of consciousness benefits from the presence of an alter ego, a 29-year-old Irishman from South Boston named Bruce Mulligan. It comes as no real surprise when Adelman reveals at the very end of the book that Mulligan never existed.

But despite the perplexities and pyrotechnics of his own style, Adelman has noted an aspect of politics too long overlooked. Bad rhetoric can do something worse than obscure the communication of policy; it can prevent needed policies from being formulated. The liberal candidate, accustomed to audiences of blacks, students and upper-middle-class women may lose the ability to speak the language of the working-class masses and thus lose the ability to see them as human beings. They may become economic abstractions, not people with very real fears. If American liberals asked themselves what they really mean by "demanding of our judicial system" or "accelerated deterioration of our metropolitan areas," and if they simply said what they mean, they might achieve two things. They might reach out to the disaffected Wallace voter who feels the liberals literally don't speak his language, and they might themselves get a clearer sense of what they are talking about. As George Orwell put it in *Politics and the English Language*, still the classic work on this sort of question, "if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought."

Jonathan Groner

Jonathan Groner is graduating from Columbia Law School this spring. He has served as a summer intern at *TNR*.

Roger Rosenblatt on television

Harry O

In "Lester," a recent episode of the detective series, "Harry O," Harry O(rwell), ex-cop, is hired to help defend a college student against a charge of rape and murder. The victim was Lester's girlfriend. Lester's car bears down on the girl at the outset of the story. Lester's case is not strengthened by the fact that another former girlfriend of his was murdered in exactly the same way, years before, in Lester's home town. The method was strangulation with the girl's own bra; the body was left nude; a flash bulb was found beside the body suggesting that the murderer wanted snapshots of his achievement.

Lester is an engaging young man, full of smiles and admiration for Harry. He wants to become a detective like Harry and riddles Harry with questions on criminology. We learn that Lester has his own crime lab at home. Harry mildly protests, "I'm just a detective," and knows nothing of the famous criminologists to whom Lester refers. Instead he doggedly goes about his trade, giving one-word answers when he speaks at all, and eventually narrowing down the

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suspects in our view to Lester and two of his college friends, also from Lester's home town. Near the end Lester escapes from police custody drawing additional, if commonplace, suspicion on himself.

Between the two other suspects, a boy named Pierce and a wistful sculptress, Judy, Pierce looks guiltier. Harry arranges to meet Lester in the old mansion where the more recent murder occurred. Entering a circular room at the top of the house he hears the door slam and lock behind him. Without turning around he says, "Let's talk, Judy," ending our doubts and choices. Judy, crazy and in love with Lester to whom she believed herself married, had knocked off the competition. Now she has similar thoughts about Harry, and shoots at him unsuccessfully through the bars of the door. This was a set-up; the police arrive, just as Harry had planned. "That's criminology," exults Lester.

Nothing in the episode is particularly well done, including criminology, except perhaps for Lester's persistent enthusiasm that wears nicely opposed to Harry's professionalism. As a series "Harry O" has done both better and worse than this story, though the mean is low. The quality of each individual episode, however, has little to do with the success of the series. That success rests entirely with David Janssen, the hero—not on his abilities as an actor but on our memories of him. When we watch Janssen we are watching our memories, and what we approve of in "Harry O" is Janssen's cognizance of this phenomenon.

The character whom Janssen had developed or developed into, is actively downtrodden. We read this in the hollows of his face and in his posture—deliberately diminished, hands stuffed deep in his pockets—a man trying to appear physically smaller than he is. His voice comes through like static under a pillow. He says nothing profound nor poetic, leaves no clues by which he is to be remembered. In sum he seems to wish to disappear. This, paradoxically, gives him a definite presence. In our insistent efforts not to allow people to disappear we have clung on to David Janssen. His antimagnetic pull versus ours has given him his stardom.

That stardom began in the early '50s, when Janssen entered television as Richard Diamond, private detective. Technically smooth, he nevertheless showed all the fuzzy edges that were later made prominent in "The Fugitive," one of television's more complicated ideas, in which he played Richard Kimball, a physician whose wife had been murdered by a one-armed man seen only by Kimball. Kimball, found guilty of his wife's murder, escaped en route to prison, thereafter to be pursued by Lt. Girard, an imitation Dostoevsky detective. Kimball spent the remaining years (and the life of the series) determined to find the real murderer and to reenter the society that had wronged him.

His anti-heroics in "The Fugitive" were guided both by his role as a hunted man and as a participant in various quasi-symbolic adventures that called for moral choices. Every week Kimball faced the same predicament: to aid some stranger whose life and trouble he had happened to brush against, or to avoid his own capture. Because he always took the former way, Kimball grew into a modern American Christian whose pilgrimage consisted of continuous reinforcements of good character. His self-sacrifice joined to this necessary perpetual motion created a loner of a special anachronistic type, one whose multiple ostracisms from the world proved him better than most people. Eventually those loner characteristics did not need to be articulated or specified, which was the point at which Janssen began to come into his own.

He once quipped that his preferred ending to "The Fugitive" series would have been a final shot of him, at last freed, standing on the beach, unscrewing one of his arms before taking a swim. Thematically such an ending would have made sense; one always felt that the fugitive was as much a victim of himself as his pursuers. This was equally true of Janssen in the movie *Warning Shot*, where he played a discredited cop wrongly accused of shooting an innocent man. It was less true of O'Hara, the treasury agent of Janssen's next TV series that failed primarily because Janssen could not bear authority and respectability. Now, with a sleight of name he becomes Harry O, the anachronism reborn. "Orwell, you are living like a dinosaur," his police friend tells him. We have known this for a while.

The fact that Janssen plays not merely on but to our memories allows him a certain critical freedom. As long as Janssen is playing Janssen, all faults of plot, like those of "Lester," can be forgiven. Such faults may in fact be exaggerated, because the weaker the story, the stronger our impression of the isolated Janssen. Herein lies a critical principle of television, the principle of accumulation: one person seen often enough in similar roles eventually becomes an advertisement for himself, making any larger context in which he appears seem almost an impertinence.

By coincidence "Lester" provides both small and large examples of this principle. For no more than a minute a young female botanist appears in order to identify an unusual leaf, an essential clue, which Harry had found on Lester's car. That same woman has appeared at least once on "Kojak," in a brief spot as a police officer. She got her start as the central figure in a Sears Die-Hard battery ad, playing the canny but patient wife of a dumb but tyrannical husband whose car battery (not a Die-Hard) needed a boost. Her positions of wisdom and authority in each of these situations, no matter how slight, have established an identification for her. Whenever that woman reappears, she is likely to be cast in parts we recognize, thereby making her as much a commercial enterprise as Sears, Roebuck & Company itself.

For Janssen this process has meant big business. By now he so depends on our

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recollections of him, that he can stumble into and survive a hollow character like Harry O, who is little more than an amalgam of those recollections. Harry is the fugitive recycled through Richard Diamond, made vulnerable as the cop in *Warning Shot*, and fortified by O'Hara. He looks ashamed of the world of crime with which he deals. He is out of things, a dinosaur. He says so little that criminals appear to confess in order to break the silence. By doing nothing he attracts life to him.

The man whom Janssen has created is in fact a celebration of nothingness. He is not a suicide, but rather someone who ignores the present and future, and keeps the past to himself. Identified by negations (ex-young man, ex-cop), he has taken the name, O. The series highlights circles; Harry's name shouts at us at the outset of each episode, encased in an O. At the beginning of "Lester" the victim is pinned by headlamps. At the end Harry is trapped in a circular room while Judy shoots at him with her revolver. Harry tells Lester that this was the error of his plan: to allow himself to be locked in a round room—"no corners."

Yet this is the room that Janssen has built. He appears to have been trapped in it, but in fact has trapped his enemy with it, just as, in a wider sense, he has trapped us. After years of experience Janssen is free to languish in the zero of his new name, to indulge in the sum total of absentee characteristics that he has gradually substituted for character. He has become a television image, a picture that, in the instant when it pops on the screen, conveys more thoughts than we can isolate and organize. Now he appears infinitely subtle where he is merely infinitely quiet.

In the wrap-up scene of "Lester," a scene common to most detective series, when the main characters relax, philosophize, or share a forced laugh, Harry is lounging at home. Lester walks in and Harry is astounded because Lester is wearing Harry's habitual outfit: chinos, an old grey sport jacket, a blue shirt open at the collar, and a loose knit tie. Lester mumbles. His hands are stuffed deep in his pockets. He wants to be Harry's double and partner. He wants everything that Harry has. Janssen smiles; one does not come by such things so easily.

Roger Rosenblatt is director of educational programs, National Endowment for the Humanities, and author of *Black Fiction* (Harvard University Press).

What Happens?

A City on a Hill
by George V. Higgins

(Knopf; $7.95)

In setting and ambience, George V. Higgins' fourth novel moves a considerable distance away from its predecessors. The Boston underworld has been replaced by the underside of politics, in Washington, Boston and points beyond. The small-time crook scruffing out his marginal existence has been replaced by a small-time political operator half-heartedly carrying out the instructions of the congressman for whom he works. The crook's feckless search for the big haul that will put him on Easy Street has been replaced by the politico's maneuvering to attach himself to a winner.

It is a noteworthy change for Higgins—the book is billed as "a stunning new departure"—yet in important respects it is no change at all. In politics as in crime, Higgins' interest lies with those who work in the shadows. He is as concerned as ever with hopes that go unrealized, prospects that never materialize, ambitions that prove excessive. As in the first three novels—which for the sake of glib categorization can be called "mysteries" though they are far more than that—he deals almost exclusively in dialogue, letting the story unfold slowly through the frequently cryptic conversations of his characters.

But what worked so brilliantly for Higgins with the petty thugs of Boston works less satisfactorily with the second-banana politicians of Boston. *A City on a Hill* contains many perceptive observations about the machinations of politics and political people, but Higgins does not seem secure of his territory. He spent some time in Washington doing journalism about Watergate, and presumably this novel is a result of what he saw and learned there. On the evidence, he did not spend enough time; *A City on a Hill* simply does not have the authenticity, the sureness, of the earlier novels. When it does have authenticity, Higgins has moved from Washington back to Boston, to the people he knows.

The making of a presidential candidacy is what preoccupies the people of this novel, which begins in the late summer of 1973 and moves well into 1974. Watergate has thrown national politics into confusion, a confusion further compounded within the Democratic party by uncertainty over Sen. Kennedy's plans. A high-mindedly liberal Democratic congressman from Massachusetts named Sam Barry takes it upon himself to get behind a reluctant candidate, a Muskiesque senator named Paul Travis, and get a jump on the field.

As agent for the task he appoints his assistant, Hank Cavanaugh, a 33-year-old ex-journalist who is jaundiced well beyond his years. Dutifully Cavanaugh pays calls on fund-raisers and local factotums from Massachusetts to the Middle West, but he knows that "Sam has me on the road trying to make wishful thinking into thinking." The undertaking does not necessarily collapse—at the end Barry is doggedly pursuing it—but Cavanaugh himself abandons it, attaching himself to another candidate for another office whose prospects seem more realistic.

A City on a Hill is a novel in which almost nothing happens. The same may have seemed true to some readers of Higgins' crime novels, yet all the circumlocutions of the barroom and street-corner conversation led toward points that became increasingly clear as the novels unfolded. Here, for the most part, the circumlocutions are merely circumlocutions. The characters talk and talk and talk, sounding less like politicians than caricatures of "Higgins characters." If the talk were more convincing, the slow pace of the novel would be not merely bearable but an intrinsic part of the action; it is impossible, however, to sustain interest in a "talky" novel when the talk is not good.

Higgins has an uncommon ability to create a character in a sentence or two, even a nuance or two, and it does not desert him here; the portrait of Sam Barry, the obstinately do-gooding congressman, is especially fine. Higgins understands the high expectations with which people come to Washington, and the disillusionment that so often sets in once the "high adventure" is over. As in the earlier novels there are some delightful digressions, vignettes that stand solidly on their own.

But Higgins does not tell us anything about politics, or Washington, that we have not already been told in the novels of William Brammer and Tom Wicker, and he has not told it as well.

Jonathan Yardley

Jonathan Yardley is book editor of the *Miami Herald*.

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Let Us Now Praise ...

Remembering James Agee edited by David Madden

(Louisiana State University Press; $8.95)

To say that Agee was human, all too human, is to imply that he was a romantic. Dwight MacDonald herein notes that, like Keats, Agee died just when he was beginning to mature as an artist. It is often observed that Agee was essentially a poet, even in his critical work, and as Louis Kronenberger puts it in a Keatsian phrase, there was a "fine excess" about everything he wrote — or did. T. S. Matthews, Agee's editor at *Time*, observes that "he wanted to destroy . . . everything in the world, including himself, that was shoddy, false and despicable"; it would be hard to find a more suggestive remark about the psychological roots of the romantic temper.

The romantic estheticism — the visual and perceptual acuity — responsible for Agee's great success as a film critic was earlier evident in his collaboration with the photographer Walker Evans on the book *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, properly regarded in this memoir, a series of tributes from those who knew him, as its author's masterpiece. It reveals the mundane life, the natural and naturalistic ordeal, ritual and tribulation of helpless and hopeless tenant farmers scarcely able to endure the Depression in Alabama, embodying not merely an obvious social critique of that period and place but also a sort of sanctity, visual poetry of a religious nature.

Robert Fitzgerald attributes to Agee a profoundly sacramental sense of the natural world, an attitude that is itself a source of paradox, mystery and ambivalence. (Consider, for example, the powerful emotions of lucidity associated with death in Agee's posthumous novel *A Death in the Family.)* It is possible to relate this ambivalence not only to Agee's sense of social disillusion but also to his critical acuity. And there is certainly a romantic motive in his absorption in films, a medium which, at the time he wrote about them with such an intensity of perception and feeling, probably lacked the quality that would justify criticism as serious and talented as Agee's.

It is ironic that *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* was ultimately the result of *Fortune*'s having assigned the subject to him and finding the case he presented unacceptable. Indeed the tendency of *Fortune* and other Luce publications to employ writers thematically or ideologically in competition with their employer is itself part of the ambivalence we confront in dealing with Agee. There is the interesting suggestion here, for example, that for *Fortune* to enlist Agee was like Germany enlisting France.

Robert Fitzgerald insists upon the religious sense of life in Agee's work — the sense of a community "immersed in mystery, exposed to a range of experience . . . [from the] divine to what can only be called the diabolical, most intelligent in awe and most needful of mercy." This was so, according to this commentary, despite the fact that Agee viewed his friend's conversion to Catholicism as a transition into the same system of coordinates that he himself had rejected in the '30s.

The romantic identification of esthetic sensuousness with a sort of naturalistic piety is very suggestive in the light of the comparison often proposed of Agee to James Joyce: the idea of art or indeed of human experience as something whose special motive, justification or vitality consists in an epiphany — a profoundly intense and affective visual symbol — is a view probably shared by both writers.

Joyce writes in *Ulysses* of "the ineluctable modality of the visible," a Thomistic opinion that is scarcely remote from the sense of revelation manifest in his best writing; and it is noteworthy that when Agee spoke of joy in his final years — "another value, almost another faith" — he was expressing respect for the happy completion of love, the criterion for him of esthetic and human success as well. Sexuality is perhaps a sort of Freudian epiphany, and anthropology (a romantic science) has made us familiar with the religious and sacramental concomitants of sex, including both sacrifice and self-sacrifice.

Thus the relation between Agee's romantic view of art, life and religion, including no doubt the agony of artistic creation, is eloquently summed up for us in this fascinating memoir written by his friends, his third wife Mia, and the priest, Father James H. Flye, who encouraged Agee's moral and literary aspirations early in his life and with whom his friendship continued, on terms of extraordinary candor and sensitivity, until his death in 1955. Santayana, a profound philosophical naturalist, once wrote, with respect to Dickens, that there is a greater piety than the outward solemnity of religion, and that is being human. The remark clearly suggests the emotional sources and significance of Agee's life and work. (Dwight MacDonald notes that Agee was, in brief, an American, of a race that matures slowly — if ever. The reference is of course to the indigenous amorphousness or lack of life-style typified by Agee's career and obvious in so much of his writing.)

The substance of this book, much of it printed in other places before this, is reminiscence by his friends and classmates of Agee's student years at Exeter and Harvard, by friends and associates at *Time* and *Fortune*, and by his Hollywood producer, John Huston: all tributes to a gracious and compassionate man who nonetheless had a good deal of the egoism of genius. The photographs have an ingratiating informality that goes well with the text and the subject.

Martin Lebowitz

Martin Lebowitz writes for *The Nation* and *The Yale Review*.

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Mute Inglorious Milton

Doris Grumbach

On December 4, 1974 I received a press release from a small press called Liberation (which is also a bookstore, at 601 West 115th St., New York 10025) telling me that Morrow Wilson, "the controversial novelist," (of whom I had never heard, let alone of his involvement in controversy) had been "bumped off" the Long John Nebel all-night radio talk show (WMCA, New York). Wilson had just published "an exposé of the publishing industry and its abuse of writers." No explanation for the bumping was given, according to the release, but Wilson thought that panelist Lyle Stuart, the publisher, did not like him from a previous encounter.

December 12 another release arrived: the novel by Morrow Wilson—**M.I.M.**—has "practically overnight become a bible for downtrodden American writers." On the 6th of January of this year more mail from Liberation, this time to let me know that other "fiercely independent writers" have begun to support Wilson's efforts: James Purdy, the Mexican-American novelist Raymond Barrio (who teaches a university-level course on how to publish your own novel), and Coleman Dowell. Wilson defended his self-publication of *M.I.M.* by saying: "You get used to publishers not doing their job. Whitman, Melville, Poe, Cooper, Irving, Crane, Mark Twain, Upton Sinclair, Carl Sandburg, Ezra Pound—virtually every significant American writer was forced to publish his own writing at one time or another."

I'm not awfully certain about these other chaps, and I hate to disillusion the angry young man, but the truth is: Twain, most profitably to himself and to his publisher, had been published by a commercial publisher. He went into the publishing business later with his nephew because he thought he could increase that profit, did so at first, and later went bankrupt.

By February 3 I had heard again from Liberation, this time with a sample of the stencil of "the finger" given to publishers and laid down on the streets of New York near their offices. "It's something every author has wanted to do at one time or another," said "rebel" writer Wilson.

I could stand the suspense no longer. I wrote to the publisher-author asking for a review copy, got a polite letter back informing me that it was against his principles to send review copies. Indeed, to do so opened the way to other kinds of corruption in publishing. Not eager to promote such heresy (*paying* for a book?) but admiring the strength of the fellow's gall, I sent him a check for $10, and quickly received my copy, unjacketed, and therefore unaccompanied by blurbs or convenient jacket summaries to aid in the production of book reviews.

I read *M.I.M.* It is an angry, sometimes very funny, more often very tiresome, scrappily written but on the whole readable account of Wilson's war on publishing and his struggles to write his book. He is at war because his mail is filled with rejection slips for the three novels he has written and not been able to have published; he blames the LW (literary world) for this; he sometimes wonders if he is not being discriminated against by the JC (Jewish conspiracy) because Jewish editors, and there are a lot of them, he claims, like Jewish writers, and Jewish writers like themselves, but the rest of the country (97 percent) doesn't give a damn.

Once he has the JC out of his system the young man with a loud horn

Skywritings

There should be no one at the end of summer
you'd send a postcard to

about the weather, how it peaks
over the island, building high

a thunderhead of mountains, how the sea
appears to you, dividing

her white skin, evening and the morning,
then leaves you stranded in her shallows,

or how the lizard deepens leaves
with his green sleep or the crab

casts shadows on the bleached sand
ghostlier than snowflakes, scurrying.

No one the mangrove can take in
through roots it lifts like fists

around your dreaming or the starfish
point to, giving up his arms

at the high tide. You keep
the last days to yourself now,

like a man who's dying but knows
how many hours he's got, possessed

by no one, you go on, walking,
walking the water with the water

darkening, the tide out, calm
where the lights in the little boats dim

on the water and go on dimming
the water, dimming and go on.

Peter Cooley

Peter Cooley is poetry editor for *North American Review*.

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explores other deep gripes: he is against reading ("it has nothing to do with writing books"), any groups of people (his heroes are loners Brando, Sinatra [sic!] James Dean), agents, rejection slips, rejection, literature professors, marriages, solitude. He communicates best, and through accidental encounters always, with bums. Some of the good parts of the book are the records, brief and poignant, of such conversations. *M.I.M.* ends with one:

I was walking along Central Park South on the park side. Across from the hotels and the dentist offices. It was night. And there across from the fountain of the Plaza and its lights were two men sitting on a bench talking.

As I came towards them I could see that one was a bum who lived in the park the other an unshaven ragged beat to hell hansom cab driver.

I crossed the street and passed close by them the driver talking to the bum and I got this much of it:

"Publicity," he said. "Nowadays everything is publicity."

Clearly MW, the Mute Inglorious Milton, subscribes to this, and believes that publishing and publicizing oneself is the alternative approach to being published and publicized. There are some traces of talent in his book, a real if only occasional wit, and far too much ego, self-pity and spray-gun attack. Are publishers justified in turning him down? If *M.I.M.* is evidence, I can see why they did. In an age of greater patience with the long-term investment, of bringing along young writers by indulging their wild oats and wayward ways he might have fared better at the hands of the LW. No publisher can hope to make money with books of this sort, and no one goes willingly to the marketplace with a self-destructing manuscript designed to lose them money. At $10 a copy, and with review copies available only if editors plunk down the cost, it is unlikely that Wilson himself will make very much. But he does have the courage of his convictions, and who knows? He may suffer the glorious fate of Walt Whitman, who did publish the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* at his own expense, and is now acclaimed, together with a poet named Dickinson who only published a few poems during her lifetime, as one of the greatest American poets.

One small disclaimer: "a bible for downtrodden American writers" *M.I.M.* is not.

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Kauffmann, *from page 20*

Joseph Papp is, by his own quite true statement, "in a commanding position to exert an influence on the course of the American theater." My own view of that influence has been recently stated at length elsewhere (*The American Scholar*, Winter 1974/75). But there's no question that his policy pronouncements make waves. Two years ago when, by invitation, he expanded his empire to include the two theaters at Lincoln Center, he drastically changed LC policy. Upstairs, formerly devoted to revivals with a seasonally stable company, would now house mostly new American plays with ad hoc casts; downstairs, formerly used for new plays, would house Shakespeare. This policy struck a resonant blow for contemporaneity against the (thus far failed) idea of a national repertory theater in New York. Now Papp has announced that next season he reverts upstairs to the original policy: revivals—except now he's going for big names. Downstairs, probably classics other than Shakespeare, with small casts.

Papp is something of an expert at using his failures to prove his virtues. Here he says that he has had to change his policy because the Beaumont subscription audience wanted classic revivals rather than disturbing new plays with obscenities. I'm quite sure that this was true of some subscribers. But it's also true that every new play he has produced at the Beaumont, with the arguable exception of *Short Eyes*, has been inept and ineptly done. (And his five Shakespeare productions downstairs at the Newhouse have been differingly execrable.)

The obvious turning point for Papp was the smash success of Liv Ullmann in *A Doll's House*. Next season he's going to continue with Beaumont productions of famous plays with stars. (He includes the obligatory prattle about building a permanent company, but he doesn't say how he reconciles this with a star policy, nor can I square it with the fact that in 20 years he has shown small intent and smaller ability to build a permanent company.) I'll be glad to see Ullmann in *Saint Joan*, and will hope that the Shaw production is better than the Ibsen; but two things are clear. A major New York rep theater is further away than ever, a fact that is little help to the repertory movement nationally. And Papp, pressured by his ego, his deficient judgment, and the results of his misconceived idea that a theater can depend for its life on a supply of good new plays, is being contorted out of his former populist self, constricted but interesting, into a commercial manager struggling for success.

Next Week

Stanley Kauffmann on the art of Antonioni

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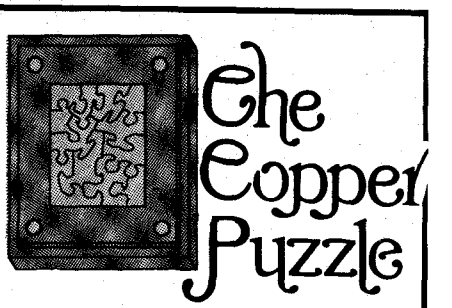

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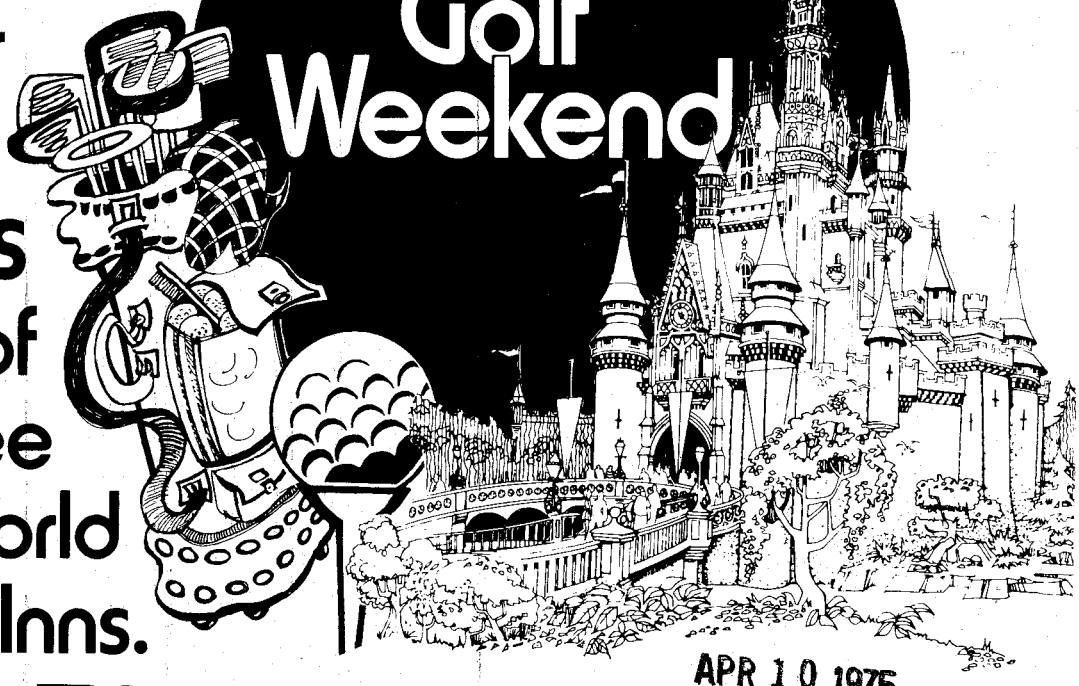

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